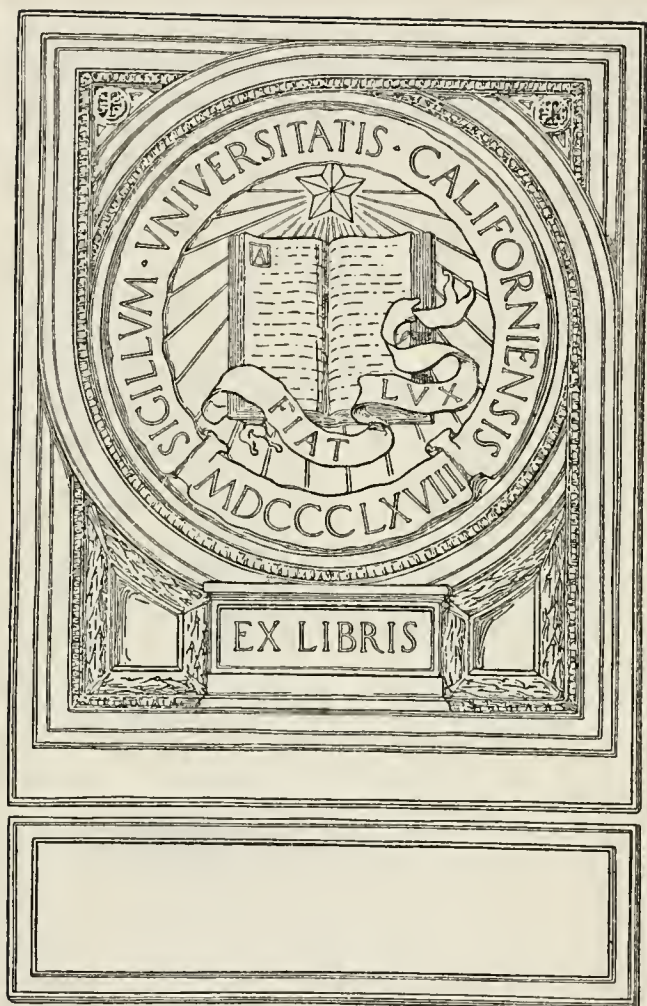


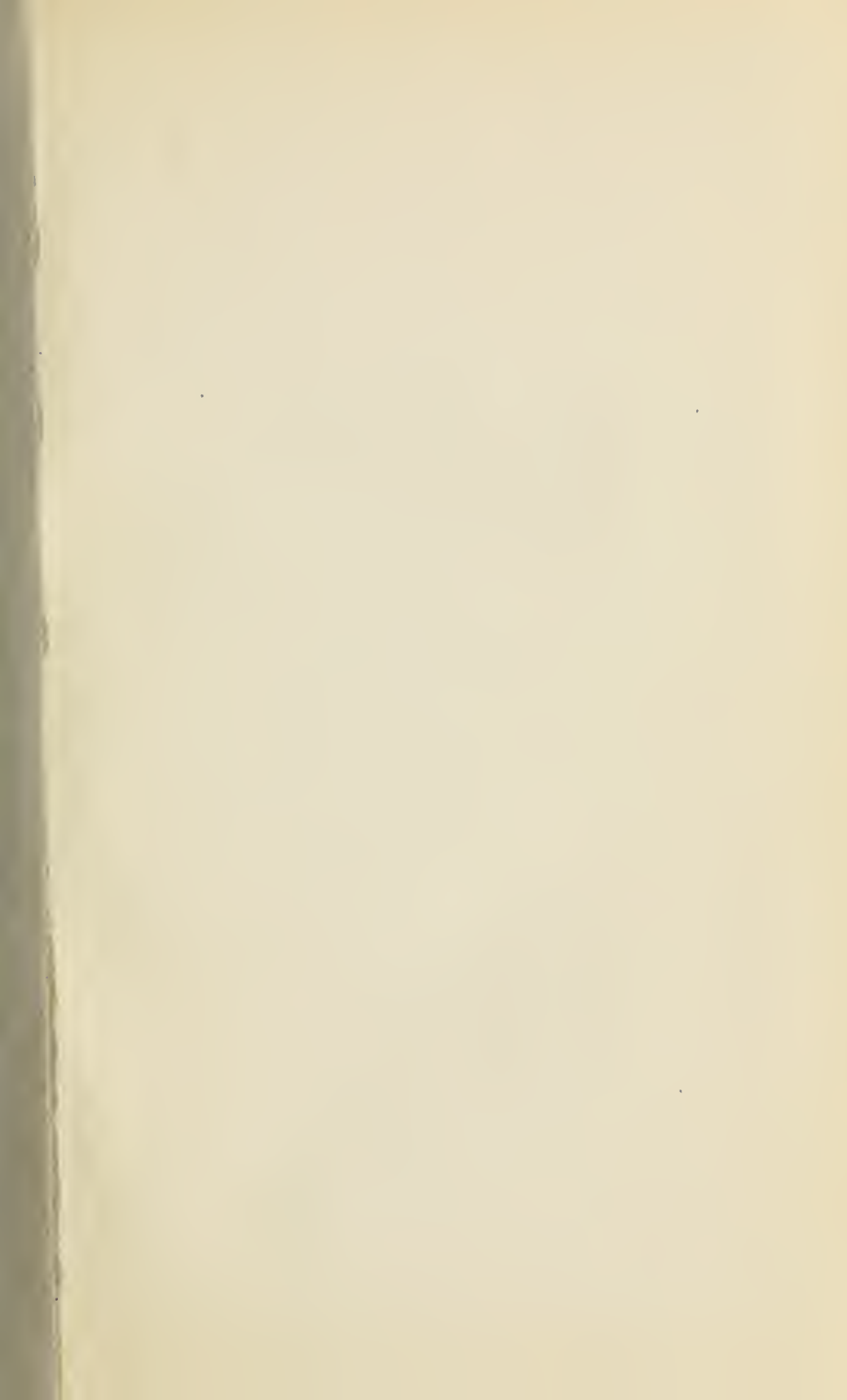


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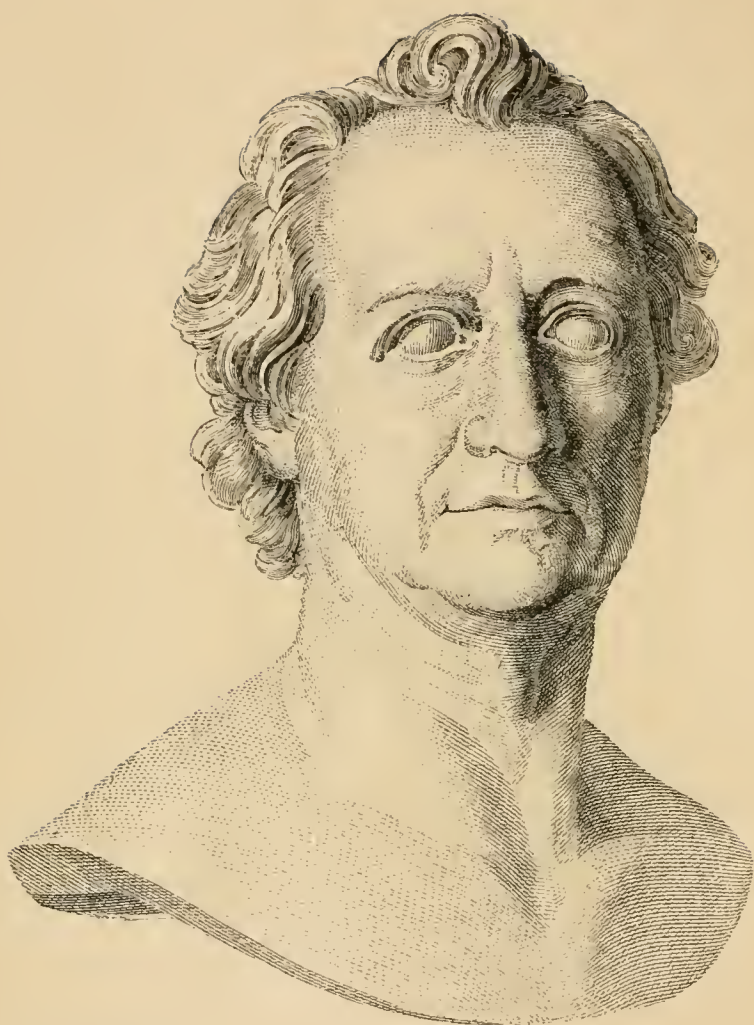
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GOETHE IN AGE.

From the bust by Rauch about 1820.

THE
LIFE AND GENIUS
OF
GOETHE

*LECTURES AT THE CONCORD SCHOOL
OF PHILOSOPHY*

EDITED BY

F. B. SANBORN



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1886

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Lectures on Goethe here printed are not the whole of those delivered at the School of Philosophy in July, 1885; for several of the lecturers have either published their essays elsewhere, or withhold them for other uses. Much also that was said in the conversations which followed the Lectures, and which threw light on the text as here printed, is necessarily omitted; although the lecturers, in revising their manuscripts, have sometimes included remarks that were thus made. Mr. Alcott, the founder of the School, although several times present during these sessions, (as he had not been since 1882,) was unable to make his comments in the conversations; and therefore some passages from his Diaries have been inserted in the lecture of Mr. Sanborn. On the other hand, Mr. Snider and other lecturers have omitted, in revision, some of the comments made in the spoken lectures.

Professor Hewett, of Cornell University, whose lecture on "Goethe in Weimar," expanded, will form part of a series on the "Homes of the German Poets"

in Harper's Magazine, and is not available for this volume, has kindly furnished for this Introduction an account of the newly discovered Goethe manuscripts which were mentioned in his lecture. It is based on the reports of Professor Geiger and Dr. Brahm, and is as follows.

THE GOETHE SOCIETY AND THE GOETHE ARCHIVES.

Walther von Goethe, Chamberlain of the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar, and the last descendant of the poet, died in Leipzig, April 15, 1885. By his will he bequeathed the Goethe house, its art and scientific collections, to the Grand Duke ; its literary treasures were left to the Grand Duchess Sophie, a princess of the house of Orange, whose intelligence and interest in literature make her a worthy successor of the Duchess Amalia. On the 9th of June a call was issued, inviting all friends of Goethe literature to unite in the formation of a Goethe Society in Weimar. The meeting was held on June 20 and 21, in the guild house of the Crossbowmen, an organization of which the poet was a member. More than one hundred eminent scholars and university professors assembled from all parts of Germany and Austria to do honor to the poet. The Goethe archives, which had been so long the object of ardent interest to all scholars, had at last been opened, and the results of the investigation were to be made known. The Society was constituted with a long list of active members, including the Empress of Germany, the granddaughter of Carl August, the Princes and the Grand Duchess of Saxe-Weimar, the Princes of Reuss-Gera, of Meiningen, and of Saxony ; the Ministers Von Gossler of Berlin, Von Gerber of Dresden, and numerous foreign scholars of Naples, Rome, Athens, and America. The Grand Duke Carl Alexander of Saxe-Weimar

accepted the office of patron of the society. Dr. Simson, President of the Imperial Court of Leipzig, formerly President of the German Parliament, was chosen the first President. The Executive Committee consists of Professor W. Scherer of Berlin, First Vice-President ; General-Intendant Von Loen of Weimar, Second Vice-President ; Professor Kuno Fischer of Heidelberg ; Paul Heyse, the novelist, of Munich ; Von Loeper of Berlin ; Von Beaulieu-Marconnay of Dresden ; Rümelin, Chancellor of the University of Tübingen, of Stuttgart ; Professor Erich Schmidt of Vienna ; Eggeling, Curator of the University of Jena ; and Ruland of Weimar. A business board was also selected. Herr Commerzienrath Moritz was appointed Treasurer of the Society.

The objects of the organization are to promote a knowledge of the whole domain of Goethe's intellectual activity and influence, and to promote special investigations in Goethe literature. Annual meetings will be held for the presentation of papers and interchange of views. The *Goethe Jahrbuch* will become the organ of the society, in which will be published much of the fresh material discovered in the archives. The volume for 1886 will contain the letters of Goethe to his sister Cornelia, and to Behrisch in Dessau ; also, the hitherto unpublished letters of the Frau Rath (Goethe's mother) to the Duchess Amalia, from the state archives, the arrangement of which has been entrusted to Archivrath Burkhardt. A subsequent volume will contain the letters of Goethe from Italy to the Frau von Stein, and also his correspondence with his wife. The Society will establish a Goethe museum and library, with facilities for investigation, and seek to complete the Goethe archives.

The Grand Duchess has determined to inaugurate two monumental works : (1.) A complete life of Goethe, based on his diaries and the additional material contained among his papers. This has been undertaken by that most eminent Goethe scholar, Privy-Councillor von Loeper. (2.) A new authentic edition of his works, based upon the collation of all

existing manuscripts, which will devolve upon Von Loeper, Scherer, and Erich Schmidt, the last of whom has resigned his professorship in the University of Vienna to accept the Directorship of the Goethe Archives.

At a later session of the Society, Herr von Loeper and Professor Scherer presented the results of their examination of the archives. Six cases were filled with the manuscripts. One contained accounts of domestic expenses, the bills of butchers and bakers, preserved with that order which was characteristic of the poet; a second contained careful notes, from the highest authorities, together with the results of his own observations in science; two other cases contained manuscripts of his works, journals, and letters. Von Loeper gave a general view of the contents of two cases out of the six, which he had been able to examine. The material may be divided into three parts: (1.) Manuscripts of Goethe's works; (2.) Letters; and (3.) Diaries.

I. The existing manuscripts, while not presenting new and complete works, reveal the methods of study of the poet, the vast field of his intellectual activity, and the origin, growth, and connection of his various writings. They begin with the unique copy of the "*Höllenfahrt Jesu Christi*," written in 1765, and published in "*Die Sichtbaren*" in 1766, and end with his last great work, the Second Part of *Faust*, in 1831, thus covering a period of sixty-six years. Many manuscripts most eagerly anticipated were not found, among them the original of *Faust*. Count Friedrich Stolberg, in describing a visit to Weimar in 1775, speaks of a glorious afternoon when Goethe read "his half-completed *Faust*, a noble poem," to the Duchesses and himself. This manuscript, which Goethe carried with him to Italy, would settle many questions in *Faust* criticism. The preliminary sketch of "*Wilhelm Meister*," spoken of by Herder, and its earlier form, as well as the first version of "*Tasso*," are missing. Among the treasures revealed, however, from the pre-Weimar days, are a fine manuscript of "*Der Ewige Jude*"; the first manuscript of "*Götz von*

Berlichingen"; a hitherto unknown collection of dialogues, in one of which Frau Aja plays a part (October 14, 1774); and a volume of youthful poems, parts of which are known through copies in the possession of the Herders and Frau von Stein; also, three versions of the "Mitschuldigen" (probably later revisions), and several manuscripts of "Prometheus," one copied by Lenz, and one by the Fräulein von Göchhausen. Belonging to the period of his residence in Weimar are copies of his minor dramatic works, among them three manuscripts of the "Triumph der Empfindsamkeit."

From the period of Goethe's residence in Italy there are versions of the "Iphigenie" in prose and in iambics, "Tasso," and the "Roman Elegies" complete, in his own autograph. Of later date are three autograph manuscripts of the "Venetian Epigrams," with many hitherto unpublished; some of these are of an erotic nature, others were directed against Lavater, and still others were anti-clerical in spirit. A manuscript of the "Grosskophta" as an opera was also found, and "Elpenor" in two versions. Of the period of Goethe's connection with Schiller, there is the manuscript of "Hermann und Dorothea," copied probably by A. W. Schlegel, with corrections by Goethe. There are also numerous smaller works and fragments,—among the latter the beginning of a tragedy in five acts, called "Das Mädchen von Oberkirch," in which Goethe treats the phenomena of the French Revolution. He located the action in the Alsatian village of Oberkirch, with the surroundings of which he was familiar. There is also a beautiful manuscript of that ambitious fragment, the "Achilleïs," in which Goethe, filled with the spirit of his Homeric studies, undertook a classical epic, in continuation of the Iliad, but stopped with the first canto. A plan, however, has been found, embracing the action of the six books originally contemplated. Goethe's enthusiasm for Homer is further shown by essays in the translation of various passages in hexameters, and even a critical interpretation of an obscure passage.

His productivity is shown by the vast materials accumulated in his later studies. Among these are poems and *collectanea* for the "Divan," all in autograph, and nearly all supplied with dates. These exhibit various readings and rejected passages, and are of great value in the interpretation and historical criticism of the verses as they stand. He even attempted a "Historisches Volksbuch" (1808). Numberless minor poems and fragments were found, occasionally recreations of the charming evenings of the literary "circles," but more often the records of more serious work. Among them are additional *Zahme Xenien*, invectives, political stanzas, attacks on persons, *Erotica*, etc. There is an attack upon Wolfgang Menzel, whose bitter hostility could not always leave Goethe unmoved. He is called a "Potenziierter Merkel." There is also an addition to the poem, "Es ist ein Schuss gefallen," with references to Friedrich Schlegel, and Müller, the romanticist and publicist, who followed his friend to the Roman communion.

Professor Scherer, in his investigations, gave especial attention to the manuscripts of "Faust." He found, what cannot be a surprise, from Goethe's own expressions, that the poet himself had attempted an adaptation of the First Part to the stage. His plan for its representation included in the first act the Dedication, Prelude, and Prologue in Heaven. Music was introduced skilfully and effectively in many passages; as in the abridged monologue, and in the scene of Faust's covenant with the evil spirit, when the choir of spirits is heard contending with one another, "He will sign," "He will not sign," singing in chorus, until Mephistopheles cries,

"Blut ist ein ganz besonder Saft."

Goethe's taste for the opera, and his estimate of the capacity of music to heighten dramatic effect, are shown by this treatment. This scheme or arrangement is often styled in the manuscript "melodrama." As early as 1810, Goethe considered the presentation of "Faust" on the stage, and requested Zelter to write the music for the Easter Song and the Slumber Song of

the Spirits, "Schwindet ihr dunkeln Wölbungen droben"; but the musician declined, and Goethe dropped the matter for the time. Later, he was very angry at the proposed production of "Faust" in Weimar in 1828, before consultation with him, "as though he were no longer alive, and without asking what view he might have in the manner of its presentation." For the Helena scenes there is the most abundant material, and there is a manuscript, "Helena im Mittelalter, ein satyrisches-Drama," which later bears the odd title, "Satyr-Drama, eine Episode zu Faust." The inference is drawn from this, that Goethe's earliest work on the "Helena" continued, in the ancient metres, until the appearance of "Faust." The results of this examination are in no respect complete or final.

II. The second division includes the letters to and from Goethe. These cover an extended period, — from his student days in Leipzig to his late Weimar days. New and unexpected materials are here presented. Of high value in determining the history of Goethe's life, and his relations to his family, are his letters to his sister Cornelia. Strehlke, in his catalogue of Goethe's letters, recently completed, says, "No single letter of Goethe to his sister or his father is known"; but here we have a welcome collection of letters to his sister, the companion of his first triumph, whose loss he so greatly mourned. There are also letters to Behrisch in Dessau, the friend of his university days in Leipzig, from whom he parted with so much regret. There are also three letters written while an advocate in Frankfort, and thirty-eight letters to the Minister von Fritsch. The series of letters which will attract most attention are those to his wife, covering twenty-five years in an unbroken succession, from 1792 to her death in 1816. They are described as evincing a "constant ardor and sincerity of feeling, and to afford an irrefutable view of Goethe's domestic happiness. He communicates to her all the interests of his life, his poetic undertakings, visits, and moods, and shows a faithful interest in her domestic duties. He is always the kind, loving, attentive husband. Amid the

excitements of his campaign in France, he longs for his home, and, for his highest happiness, wishes his dear one with him in Verdun." There are a hundred and eighty letters from Goethe's mother, in one collection, and additional letters incorporated in the current correspondence of each year; also, numerous letters, mostly notes, from Frau von Stein, serving to show the character of their later intercourse. There are letters of Frau von Grotthus, Frau von Eybenberg, Amalie von Imhof, and F. Caspers, and single remembrances from Lotte Buff (1798) and Lili Schöнемann (1801).

Goethe's letters from the Grand Duke Carl August are preserved intact in the collection, and show how unsatisfactory the present edition is. This correspondence, edited by Dr. Vogel, was published in 1863 in an incomplete form. It had been withheld, owing to two expressions of Goethe,—one in a letter of November 17, 1787, from Rome: "Burn, I pray you, my letters at once, that they may be read by no one; with this hope I can write more freely." Before his departure for Switzerland in 1797, he said: "I have burned all the letters sent to me since 1772, from a positive disinclination to the publication of the silent march of friendly intercourse." His views afterward changed, and he published parts of his correspondence covering this period. The letters preserved in the Goethe archives show that the destruction of his correspondence was not so general as his language would imply. Of particular interest at the present time is the discovery of Carlyle's letters to the poet, and copies of Goethe's letters in reply.

The Schiller correspondence suffered from the arbitrary and capricious suppressions of its editors, and the fourth edition was necessary to give it in substantial correctness. Even in its present form there is much to be desired. Goethe himself says that letters are the most valuable memorial of a man. His correspondence grew with his fame; his interest extended to the most varied branches of literature, art, antiquities, and science; and letters from scholars, poets, and artists multiplied

during the later period of his life. They present his relations to individuals, the growth of his opinions, his judgments of men and things, and the inception and progress of his works. Political events in Europe do not escape him. Discoveries, facts, and theories are mirrored in his all-reflecting mind ; the works of contemporary and past writers are estimated ; and thus his letters become a contribution to a knowledge of the literary history of his time.

III. The third division contains Goethe's diaries. These begin in 1776, before the first year of his residence in Weimar had passed, and extend to the 16th of March, 1832, but six days before his death. They present a rich material for estimating the poet's life, the existence of which was entirely unsuspected. Meagre and inaccurate extracts from certain portions had appeared, limited in range and time ; but the originals are presented here entire. There is, however, a blank between the years 1782 and 1796, interrupted by two brief beginnings in 1791 and 1793. These journals are at first short, condensed notices, which increase in fulness and richness of contents as his life advances. From 1817 they average nearly four volumes a year. Important events are recorded with great accuracy. Days like those which followed Schiller's death contain no entry. These diaries furnish means for determining the dates of Goethe's works, since little that the poet wrote went at once to the press. Many works were for years under his hand ; they were begun, discontinued, resumed, modified, and completed, and their final form differed greatly from the original plan.

The art collections are extensive, and of great interest. They contain plaster casts ; original drawings of the old masters, Netherland art being especially represented ; and even sketches of early Italian painters ; many drawings of personal friends, such as Tischbein, Meyer, Hackert, Kraaz, Angelica Kaufmann, and Kniep ; a rich collection of majolicas ; Italian medals, two thousand in number, some of which are unique ; numerous plaques, two hundred Italian and German bronzes,

antiques, and a large number of engravings. To these general art collections have been added, by gift of the heirs at law (the families of Count Henckel von Donnersmark and the Vulpus family), the personal memorials of the poet, consisting of portraits, busts, medallions, and casts of the same. Among these are portraits of Goethe by Angelica Kaufmann and Tischbein, and also a graceful portrait, probably representing Christiane.

Two portraits of Goethe are given in our volume; one representing him in youth, before the publication of any except his earliest works; the other engraved from Rauch's bust, which was made in August, 1820, when Goethe was seventy-one. Both are interesting, and neither is much known in America, although reduced copies of the bust are common.

A partial bibliography of works relating to Goethe's youth will be found at the close of Professor White's lecture. We add here a more general, but still very incomplete bibliography, compiled by Mr. John Edmands of the Philadelphia Mercantile Library, for the benefit of the frequenters of that institution.

READING NOTES ON GOETHE.

THE following notes and references will be found pertinent, and will be useful to any who may wish to pursue a course of reading on these subjects :—

A. — WORKS OF GOETHE.

- Autobiography ; or, Truth and Poetry, from my Life, edited by P. Godwin. New York, 1846-47. 2 v.
- Bride of Corinth, with Anster's Faust.
- Campaign in France, translated by R. Fairie. London, 1858.
- Same, in his Miscellaneous Travels, pp. 71-247.
- Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe from 1794-1805, edited by L. D. Schmitz. London, 1877. 2 v.
- Dramatic Works ; comprising Faust, Iphigenia in Tauris, Torquato Tasso, Egmont, and Götz von Berlichingen. London, 1851.
- Egmont ; a Tragedy in Five Acts. Boston, 1841.
- Elective Affinities. Boston, 1872.
- Same, in Novels and Tales. Reviewed in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, C. 863.
- Eleonora, with a Poetic Epistle from Werter to Charlotte. London, 1787.
- Essays on Art, translated by S. G. Ward. New York, 1862.
- Faust, eine Tragödie. Stuttgart, 1867.
- Faustus, a Dramatic Mystery ; the Bride of Corinth, the first Walpurgis Night, translated and illustrated with Notes by J. Anster. London, 1835.
- Faust ; a Tragedy in Two Parts, translated by J. Birch, with engravings by Brain after Retsch. London, 1839.
- Same, translated, with Notes, by C. T. Brooks. [Part I. only.] Boston, 1856.
- Same, translated by L. Filmore. London, 1847.

Same, translated into Verse by J. Galvan. Dublin, 1860.

Same, translated, with Notes, by A. Hayward. Boston, 1859.

Part I. "Previous to Taylor's translation Hayward's prose rendering was the leading work consulted by scholars on account of its full notes and lengthy introduction." — *Literary World*, XII. 273.

Same, translated by T. Martin. Edinburgh, 1865. Reviewed in North British Review. XLIV. 50.

Same, translated in Rime by C. Kegan Paul. London, 1873. Reviewed in Revue des Deux Mondes, CXLIII. 921.

Same, translated into the Original Metres by Bayard Taylor. Boston, 1871. 2 v. Has a Preface and extended Notes. "Bayard Taylor's notes and comments are exhaustive, and *must* be consulted by any student of the subject who wishes to go to the bottom of disputed points. His translations are quoted even by the latest and best German commentators in proof of the meaning of doubtful passages." — *Literary World*, XII. 273.

Same. The Text, with English Notes, Essays, and Verse Translations, by E. J. Turner. London, 1882. The First Part only.

Same. Shelley's Translations of the Prologue in Heaven and of the May-day Night scene, may be found in his Poetical Works. London, 1877. IV. 284.

Same. The Liberal. London, 1822. I. 121.

Boyesen's Goethe and Schiller has a full and elaborate Commentary on the two parts of Faust, pp. 151-285.

The original Faust-Legend may be found in Roscoe's German Novelists, I. 256.

Faust and Marguerite. V. 35.

German Emigrants *in his* Novels and Tales.

Good Women *in his* Novels and Tales.

Götz of Berlichingen, with the Iron Hand, an Historical Drama. Dublin, 1799.

Götz von Berlichingen *in his* Dramatic Works.

Herman and Dorothea, translated by Ellen Frothingham. Illustrated. Boston, 1870.

Same, translated into English Hexameters, with an Introductory Essay. London, 1849.

Same, translated by T. C. Porter. New York, 1854.

Iphigenia in Tauris, translated by W. Taylor, *in his* Historic Survey of German Poetry. London, 1830. III. 249.

Same *in his* Dramatic Works.

Margaret Fuller *in her* Life Without, p. 51, gives a sketch of this Drama, with Extracts.

Letters from Switzerland, *in his* Miscellaneous Travels, pp. 1-67.

Letters to Leipzig Friends, edited by O. Jahn, translated by R. Slater. London, 1866.

Meister's Travels ; or, The Renunciants, a Novel. Boston, 1851.

Memoirs written by himself. New York, 1824.

The same as the Autobiography above, but another translation, and contains only fifteen of the twenty books. It contains biographical notices of the principal persons mentioned in the memoirs. "A most wretched and unfaithful translation."—*Quarterly Review*.

Minor Poetry, a Selection from his Songs, Ballads, and other lesser Poems, translated by W. G. Thomas. Philadelphia, 1859.

Miscellaneous Travels ; comprising Letters from Switzerland, the Campaign in France, the Siege of Mainz, and a Tour on the Rhine. London, 1832.

Novels and Tales : Elective Affinities, Sorrows of Werther, German Emigrants, Good Women. London, 1854.

Poems and Ballads, translated by Aytoun and Martin. New York, 1859.

Poems, translated in the Original Metres by Paul Dyrssen. New York, 1878.

Poems and Translations from the German, by C. R. Lambert. London, 1850. pp. 81-98.

Reynard the Fox. London, 1845.

Sämmtliche Werke. Stuttgart, 1850. 30 v. in 18.

Schriften. Reutlinger, 1784. 2 v.

Select Minor Poems, translated by J. S. Dwight.

Select Poems, in Baskerville's Poetry of Germany. New York, 1857. Contains a number of Goethe's Poems in the original, with English verse translations on the opposite page.

Selections from Dramas, translated, with Introduction, by A. Swanwick. London, 1843.

Siege of Mainz, *in his* Miscellaneous Travels, pp. 251-287.

- Sorrows of Werter, translated by W. Bender. London, 1801.
- Stella : a Drama in Five Acts, translated by Benjamin Thompson. German Theatre, V. 6. London, 1801.
- Torquato Tasso, *in his* Dramatic Works.
- A Tour on the Rhine, etc., *in his* Miscellaneous Travels, pp. 291-424.
- Truth and Poetry, same as the Autobiography above.
- The First Walpurgis Night. (The English version by W. Bartholomew.) Compiled by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. Boston [no date].
- Werther, Trad. nouv. et Notice biog. et litt. de L. Enault. Paris, 1855.
- West-Easterly Divan, translated, with Introduction and Notes, by J. Weiss. Boston, 1877. Reviewed in Blackwood, CXXXII. 742.
- Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship. London, 1873. Reviewed by D. A. Wasson in Atlantic Monthly, p. 16.

B. — WORKS ON GOETHE.

- De Staël, Madame. Goethe and his Dramas *in her* Germany. London, 1814. I. 265, II. 138.
- Taylor, W. Review of Goethe's Works *in his* Historic Survey of German Poetry. London, 1830. III. 242-379. Contains a Translation of Iphigenia entire, and large portions of other works.
- Carlyle, T. Death of Goethe, *in his* Criticisms and Miscellaneous Essays. London, 1872. IV. 42.
- . Goethe *in his* Criticisms and Miscellaneous Essays. London, 1872. I. 172.
- . Goethe's Works and Character, *in his* Criticisms and Miscellaneous Essays. Boston, 1838. I. 220.
- . Goethe's Helena, *in his* Criticisms and Miscellaneous Essays. Boston, 1838. I. 162.
- . Same. London, 1872. I. 126.
- . Goethe's Works, *in his* Criticisms and Miscellaneous Essays. London, 1872. IV. 132.
- . Life of Schiller. New York, 1846. Describes the friendship between Goethe and Schiller, pp. 111, 273.

- Eckermann, J. P. *Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of his Life*, translated by S. M. Fuller [Ossoli]. Boston, 1839.
- Menzel, W. *Goethe, in his German Literature*, translated by C. C. Felton. Boston, 1840. III. 1.
- Austin, S. *Characteristics of Goethe, from the German of Falk, von Müller, &c., with Notes*. Paris, 1841. 2 v.
- Retsch, M. *Illustrations of Goethe's Faust*. London, 1843.
- Characteristics of Men of Genius. Goethe*. London, 1846.
- Jeffrey, Francis. *Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, in his Contributions to the Edinburgh Review*. Paris, 1846. p. 104.
- Ulrici, H. *Goethe in Relation to Shakespeare, in his Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*. London, 1846. p. 512.
- Longfellow, H. W. *Goethe, in his Hyperion*. Boston, 1849. p. 155.
- Moschzisker, F. A. *Goethe, in his Guide to German Literature*. London, 1850. II. 95-170.
- Emerson, R. W. *Goethe, or the Writer, in his Representative Men*. Boston, 1851. p. 209.
- Döring, H. *J. W. von Goethe's Biographie*. Jena, 1853.
- Bancroft, G. *The Age of Schiller and Goethe, in his Literary and Historical Miscellanies*, p. 167. New York, 1855. Contains translations of several of Goethe's poems, p. 231.
- Lewes, G. H. *The Life and Works of Goethe, with Sketches of his Age and Contemporaries*. London, 1875. 2 v.
- . *Same*. Boston, 1856. 2 v.
- “Mr. Lewes's main work was done a long time ago, when comparatively few of Goethe's letters were printed. And the revision mentioned in the Preface of 1875 was not a thorough, adequate revision.” — *T. W. Lyster*.
- Masson, David. *Shakespeare and Goethe, and The Three Devils, Luther's, Milton's, and Goethe's, in his Essays, Biographical and Critical*. Cambridge, 1856. pp. 453.
- . *The Three Devils*. London, 1874. pp. 1-124.
- Godwin, Parke. *Goethe, in his Out of the Past*, p. 341. New York, 1870.
- Taillandier, Saint-René. *Goethe, in Nouvelle Biographie Générale*. Paris, 1857. XXI. 27.
- Metcalf, Frederick. *Goethe, in his History of German Literature*. London, 1858. pp. 431-453.

Arnim, Bettine von. Goethe's Correspondence with a Child. Boston, 1859. For a review of this work, by M. E. W. Sherwood, see *Atlantic Monthly*, XXXI. 216.

✓ Ossoli, Margaret Fuller. Goethe, *in her* Life Without and Life Within. Boston [1859]. p. 23.

De Quincey, T. Goethe, *in his* Biographical Essays. Boston, 1860. p. 227.

Heine, W. The Romantic School. New York, 1882. The chapter on "German Literature to the Death of Goethe," treats largely of Goethe and his relations to Herder, Lessing, the Schlegels, and others.

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THE Lectures actually delivered at the School of Philosophy in the summer of 1885 were those in the following list, in the order indicated by the dates.

CONCORD SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY.

SEVENTH SESSION.

LECTURES AND SUBJECTS, 1885.

I. Goethe's Genius and Work.

- July 16. *Goethe's Self-Culture.* By Mr. JOHN ALBEE, of New Castle, N. H.
- " 18. *Goethe and his "Mährchen."* By Rev. Dr. F. H. HEDGE, of Cambridge, Mass.
- " 24. *Goethe's Relation to Kant and Spinoza in Philosophy.* By Dr. F. L. SOLDAN, of St. Louis.
- " 20. *Goethe's Faust.* By Professor HARRIS.
- " 21. *Goethe's Youth.* By Professor H. S. WHITE, of Cornell University.
- " 17. *The "Ewig-Weibliche."* By Mrs. E. D. CHENEY, of Boston.
- " 22. *Goethe's Faust.* By Mr. D. J. SNIDER, of Cincinnati.
- " 20. *Goethe's Relation to English Literature.* By Mr. F. B. SANBORN.
- " 28. *Goethe as a Man of Science.* A Conversation conducted by Mr. SNIDER and Professor HARRIS.
- " 27. *The Novellettes in "Wilhelm Meister."* By Professor HARRIS.
- " 28. *"Wilhelm Meister" as a Whole.* By Mr. D. J. SNIDER.
- " 18. *Goethe and Schiller.* By Rev. Dr. BARTOL, of Boston.
- Aug. 1. *The Women of Goethe.* By Mrs. JULIA WARD HOWE, of Boston.
- July 22. *The Elective Affinities.* By Mr. S. H. EMERY, Jr., of Concord, Mass.

- July 25. *Goethe's Titanism.* By Professor THOMAS DAVIDSON, of Orange, N. J.
- “ 23. *Goethe at Weimar.* By Professor W. T. HEWETT, of Cornell University.
- “ 21. *Child-Life as portrayed in Goethe's Works.* By Mrs. CAROLINE K. SHERMAN, of Chicago.
- “ 27. *Goethe as Playwright.* By Mr. WILLIAM O. PARTRIDGE, of Brooklyn, N. Y.
- “ 29. *The Style of Goethe.* By Mr. C. W. ERNST, of Boston.

II. A Symposium: Is Pantheism the Legitimate Outcome of Modern Science?

Lectures by Rev. Dr. A. P. PEABODY (July 29) and Mr. JOHN FISKE (July 29) of Cambridge, Professor HARRIS (July 30), Dr. G. H. HOWISON of California (July 31), Dr. F. E. ABBOTT (July 31) of Cambridge, and Dr. MONTGOMERY of Texas (July 31).

Readings from Thoreau, July 24, by Mr. H. G. O. BLAKE, of Worcester.

The Lectures on Pantheism appeared in the “Journal of Speculative Philosophy” for October, 1885, except Mr. Fiske’s on “The Idea of God,” which has been published as a separate volume by Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, who published in the same way, in 1884, Mr. Fiske’s Lecture on “The Destiny of Man.” The Lectures of 1884, on “The Genius and Character of Emerson,” were published in a volume by J. R. Osgood and Company, and are now sold by Ticknor and Company, who publish the present volume; and members of the School are requested to order the volumes of the publishers, and not of the Faculty of the School.

The *Eighth* Session of the School will open on Wednesday, July 14, 1886, and will continue two

weeks. The lectures and conversations of the first week (July 14–21) will be on *Dante and his Divine Comedy*; those of the second week (July 22–29), on *Plato and his Influence in Philosophy*. The Lecturers will be mainly the same as in 1885, but with some omissions and important additions. It is intended to publish a volume of the Lectures on Dante in 1886.

F. B. S.

CONCORD, December 1, 1885.





J. W. von Goethe.

. GOETHE IN YOUTH.



THE LIFE AND GENIUS OF GOETHE.



I.

GOETHE'S YOUTH.

BY HORATIO S. WHITE.

It will readily be observed that Goethe's life may be divided into distinct periods, each defined by some change in his outward relations, and each characterized by some change in his inner development. The great divisions which would naturally be made are: his youth before the removal to Weimar; the decade in that Thuringian capital preceding his departure for Italy, — a journey which forms the most significant epoch in his life; the period of mature manhood following, which was passed in the society of Schiller; and, finally, the long and fruitful old age during the first third of the present century. Leaving to others the task of tracing Goethe's later achievements in diverse fields, — where his tireless energy and his perennial vigor of spirit display him as the master of prose, the incomparable poet, the

literary despot, the histrionic magnate, the faithful prime-minister, the profound investigator and gifted discoverer, and the unwearied sage, — it shall be my attempt to depict him in his early youth, and in that perhaps most fascinating time of his young manhood embracing the dawning consciousness of varied powers which came to him at Strassburg, the stimulating intercourse with Herder, the impulse toward the study of Greek and English literature, the fleeting fervor for Gothic architecture, the sad but lovely idyl of Sessenheim, the tempestuous ardor of the Wetzlar entanglement, and the first flush of creative genius breaking forth in “Götz,” in “Werther,” in his matchless lyrics, and in the beginnings of “Faust.”

For the study of this period we have ample sources. It is but a few years since a work appeared under the title, “Der junge Goethe,” edited by Professor Bernays of Munich, and comprising the correspondence and literary proceeds of the first twenty-five years of Goethe’s life. The editor had consulted the original manuscripts and first editions, and had in most cases carefully restored the early orthography, which had been modernized in the later revisions. All the spice and raciness of Goethe’s youthful style, the strongly flavored South-German vernacular, the erratic spelling and still more erratic punctuation, have been preserved in their primitive freshness. Specially valuable is the series of letters in which his whole outward and inner life is mirrored with

all the warmth of unreserve which marked the epistolary literature of the last century.

To this useful work let us add Goethe's Autobiography, covering precisely the same period, but composed at a much later date.

"The question whether one should write his own biography," says Goethe, "is quite malapropos. I consider him who does so to be the most courteous of men."

In his Autobiography he reports that throughout his life he could not refrain from embodying in a written form his personal experiences, whether to relieve his soul, or to establish his conceptions of external things. "Everything which has hitherto been known as mine," he concludes, "forms therefore a great fragmentary confession, to make which complete this trifling work is a daring attempt."

To Eckermann he said, in 1824: "The most important part of the individual's life is his development, which in my case is comprised in the detailed account of '*Wahrheit und Dichtung*.'" And in 1831 he declared that the particular facts narrated in his Autobiography served merely to confirm a general reflection, a higher truth.

It is interesting to note, from a comparison between that work and the original sources, that, apart from some unessential inaccuracies and inconsistencies, Goethe's memory retained a trustworthy impression of his early experiences. It is true that discrepancies of detail have often crept into the relation; that

events may have been described in a manner somewhat different from that of their actual occurrence; that a character may have been idealized, and the outlines softened and harmonized to accord with the poet's purpose. But with all this, the portrayal of his youthful days must be considered thoroughly faithful to the inner meaning of his life.

Other contemporary accounts of Goethe's early career exist, together with a vast mass of commentary; but these two sources are sufficient to present him to us both as he unconsciously depicted himself at the time, and as he afterwards consciously depicted himself to the world.

It may be appropriate at this point to recall the principal features of Goethe's earlier years. We find in them an exceptional concurrence of fortunate circumstances. Born into an advantageous environment, an independent citizen of a free municipality, endowed with great natural gifts, possessed of varied accomplishments and acquirements, with comfortable if not affluent means, coming into contact with many of the illustrious people of his day, and viewing many of the notable events of that period, his life assumes more than an individual interest, and becomes important and significant as typifying and illustrating his times. The Lisbon earthquake touches his young heart, and forces him to question the goodness of the Creator; the French occupy Frankfort, and he is initiated into the political quarrels of the Seven Years' War; in his rambles

among the common people at their labors and their pastimes in that curious old town, he imbibes the spirit of their walk and conversation, which is afterwards reflected with fidelity in the popular scenes of his dramas; the coronation of Joseph the Second unrolls before his eyes the pageantry of the pompous but hollow Empire; as a student at Leipzig he skims round the circle of knowledge, and chants,

“Da steh' ich nun, ich armer Thor,
Und bin so klug als wie zuvor.”

The Dresden Gallery attracts and charms him with its pictorial treasures; in Frankfort the gentle and devout mystic, Fräulein von Klettenberg, pursues with him studies in alchemy, and imbues him with the doctrines of pietism; and in 1770 he arrives at Strassburg, in season to behold the daughter of Maria Theresia crossing the Rhine on her triumphal and fateful journey toward the French capital.

Let us here note a few characteristic passages from his earlier letters. Writing in 1764, at the age of fourteen, he describes himself as follows:—

“One of my chief defects is, that I am somewhat impulsive. You know of course the choleric temperament; on the other hand, no one forgets an affront more readily than I. Furthermore, I am quite accustomed to be imperious; but when I have nothing to say, I can let things go. However, I am quite willing to submit to authority when it is exercised as should be expected. One thing more, I am very impatient, and do not like to remain long in uncertainty.”

To a home friend he writes from Leipzig, in 1765, describing his college life :—

“What am I studying? Is it worth while asking? *Institutiones imperiales. Historiam juris. Pandectas*, and a private course on the first seven and last seven titles of the Codex. For one does not need any more, the rest one forgets anyway. No, your obedient servant! That we will let well alone. —Next week the courses in philosophy and mathematics begin.

“Gottsched I have not yet seen. He has married again. You know it though. She is nineteen and he is sixty-five. She is four shoes tall and he seven. She is as thin as a herring and he as stout as a sack of feathers. —I’m cutting a great figure here, but am no dandy yet, nor shall I become so. I have to be rather clever in order to get time to study. To parties, concerts, the theatre, at banquets, suppers, excursions, no end! Ah, it’s a precious time, but a precious business too! It costs! The deuce, but my purse feels it.

“Stop! save us! hold on! Don’t you see them flying? There go two Louis d’or marching off. Help! There goes another. Heavens! a couple more. Dimes with us are like cents with you. But yet one may live very cheaply here. I hope to get through the year on three hundred thalers—what do I say?—with two hundred thalers. N. B. Not counting in what has already gone to the dogs.”

At the end of his Leipzig course he writes back, in 1768, a grateful letter to Oeser, one of his instructors :—

“What do I not owe you, dearest Professor, that you have shown me the way to the true and beautiful, that you have rendered my heart susceptible to all that is stimulating? The taste which I have for what is beautiful, my knowledge, my insight, — do I not possess them all through you? How true and clear the strange, almost unintelligible saying has become to me, that the workshop of the great artist develops the budding philosopher, the budding poet, more than the auditorium of the sage and the critic! Teaching does much, but encouragement does everything. Who among all my teachers has ever deemed me worthy of encouragement save you? Either all blame or all praise, and nothing can so destroy one's capacity. Encouragement after blame is sun after rain, fruitful growth.

“You have taught me to be humble without being cast down, and to be proud without presumption. I could find no end of saying what you have taught me; pardon my grateful heart this apostrophe; I have that in common with all tragic heroes, that my passion would fain pour forth in tirades, and woe to the one who gets in the way of my lava!”

These earlier years yielded an abundance of literary composition, the remnants of which reveal not indistinctly the coming lyric poet, while the two little comedies of that date betray the influence upon their composer of the lighter French dramatists, and perhaps of Wieland, with whose writings he was then quite captivated. One may also detect reflections in thin disguise of Goethe's juvenile *affaires de cœur*, the confession of which has already begun.

To Strassburg he comes at twenty. Of deep import was his sojourn in the quaint Alsatian city. It gave him the Cathedral, Herder, and Friederike.

At Leipzig Goethe had been led to regard the term *Gothic* as the Greeks did *Barbarian*. An ignorant but declared enemy to that style of architecture, he is now confronted in silent reproach by the mighty and impressive minster. His conversion is as sudden and complete as that of Saul of Tarsus; and in the rhapsodic essay, "Von Deutscher Baukunst," a memorial to the noble architect, Erwin von Steinbach, is contained his recantation. He bursts forth:—

"With what an unexpected sensation did its aspect surprise me! My soul was filled by an impression of grandeur and completeness, which, consisting of a thousand harmonious details, I was able indeed to taste and enjoy, without recognizing or explaining it. They say it is so with the joys of heaven; and how often have I returned to partake of this joy of heaven upon earth, to comprehend the giant spirit of our elder brothers in their works! How often has my eye, wearied by its searching inspection, been refreshed in cheerful repose by the evening twilight, when the countless parts melted into entire masses, and these, simple and grand, stood before my soul! Then was revealed to me in gentle premonitions the genius of the great master. And how freshly it dawned upon me in the vaporous splendor of the morning! How rejoiced I was to behold the great, harmonious masses enlivened into numberless minute details, as in works of eternal nature, down to the slightest fibre, every-

thing form, and everything adapted to the whole ! how the firmly founded monstrous structure rises lightly into air ! how like network all, and yet for eternity ! ”

If these early and enthusiastic impressions gradually faded, and well-nigh were extinguished by the stay in Italy, at the end of Goethe's life they were once more revived, less ardent, but with greater clearness, and again through the influence of his study of another worthy and imposing structure, the Cathedral at Cologne.

Before meeting Herder in Strassburg, Goethe had not come into contact with a mind of the first order. Herder was five years older, had already gained reputation as a writer, and had recently returned to Germany from an extended tour in France and Holland. He writes to his Riga friends, that, whereas before he had been frothy, vain, erratic, and whimsical, they would now find him more manly, ripe, developed, cosmopolitan, more of a Briton, and perchance thrice as ardent, instead of frivolous, Frenchy, and unstable. His relation to Goethe was similar to Goethe's relations with Schiller at the first meeting in 1788, after the Italian journey. Said Schiller, in describing to Körner this interview : “ Goethe is so far ahead of me, less perhaps in years than in experience of life and in self-development, that we shall never come together while *en route*.” Goethe felt toward Herder the same modesty of immaturity ; nor did Herder, to whom his young admirer seemed then but a wild fledgling, seek to spare his sensibilities. Mercilessly

caustic, lashing Goethe's foibles and conceits, establishing no such relations of mutual admiration and mutual palliation as then existed among many prominent German litterateurs, yet holding him by force of lofty character and a reach and range which Goethe fully acknowledged, a moral pedagogue of the finest type, and already a literary critic and historian of independent and original stamp, his was an influence to correct, to guide, and to inspire his fervid young follower. It is Herder, then, who expounds to Goethe the bearings of modern literature, who rails at the weaknesses of the contemporary native authors, who, fresh from Paris, yet sated with French materialism, turns away from Voltaire and the philosophers, although for a time singling out Rousseau alone as the apostle of the day, and aids Goethe to check and overcome his own early tendencies, who introduces him to Swift, to Goldsmith, to Ossian, and to Shakespeare anew, who teaches him to know the Greeks, to appreciate the Hebrew bards, and to realize that poetry is not the possession of a learned caste, but the heritage of all mankind.

In that initial year of their acquaintance Goethe thus addresses his new correspondent:—

“I am compelled to write to you in the midst of my first sensations. Away with mantle and collar! Your spicy letter is worth three years of every-day experience. There is no answer to it, and who could answer it? My whole self is thrilled, — that you may imagine, man, — and the vibration is still too great for my pen to move steadily.—

Herder, Herder, abide to me what you are to me." If I am destined to be your planet, I will be so, will be so gladly, will be so loyally. A friendly moon to the earth. But this — feel it absolutely — that I should rather be Mercury, the least, the smallest rather among seven, revolving with you around one sun, than the first among five turning about Saturn.

"Adieu, dear man! I will not let you go. I will not leave you. Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord. Even if I should grow weary at it!"

The later relations of Herder and Goethe at Weimar are beyond the scope of this paper, but we may recall that it was the latter's influence which secured for Herder his summons to the principal ecclesiastical position in the Duchy, and that, if their subsequent association was not always of the most cordial description, the fault or the misfortune must be laid chiefly at the door of the Herders.

Before leaving Strassburg, a word on Friederike. The well-known incidents of the story may be briefly narrated.¹ A young man, fresh from the perusal of a literature of poetry and sentiment, wanders away on horseback with a student friend over the smiling meadows. In the picturesque little village of Sessenheim he is presented to a pastor's family, whose situation to his quick imagination soon reproduces, with strange parallelism, the environment of the Wakefield group in Goldsmith's "Vicar," a work which Herder

¹ Cf. "A Pilgrimage to Sessenheim," Lippincott's Magazine, February, 1884.

was introducing to Strassburg circles. Received with full rural cordiality, he lingers and returns, and returns and lingers, until a fair heart is fatally his own. The end of his academic course is the end of the idyl. The world demands him, and to the world he yields himself; and a summer of perilous sweetness has saddened one joyous life, and left in another a lasting sting of remorse. Traces of this remorse one may find in the long deferred confession which Goethe's narrative contains, — a narrative which the aged poet could not dictate without signs of deep emotion. He depicts his conscious feeling that a withdrawal would be indefensible, his inability to break away from the beloved object even when he had in purpose renounced her, the pain of the final parting, and the heart-rending answer of Friederike to a farewell in writing. "Here for the first time," he continues, "I was guilty, I had keenly wounded a most beautiful soul; and the period which followed was an almost unendurable time of gloomy repentance." He seeks for aid in poetry, and acknowledges that the two Marys in "*Götz*" and "*Clavigo*," and the sorry rôles which their lovers play, are the results of his remorseful contemplations. In the Gretchen of "*Faust*," too, one may recognize traits of the unaffected village maiden; and some of the most irresistible of Goethe's earlier poems were directly inspired by his acquaintance with Friederike Brion. What a gust of stormy fervor sweeps through the stanzas of "*Willkommen und Abschied*"!

“Es schlug mein Herz ; geschwind zu Pferde,
 Und fort, wild, wie ein Held zur Schlacht!
 Der Abend wiegte schon die Erde,
 Und an den Bergen hieng die Nacht;
 Schon stund im Nebelkleid die Eiche,
 Wie ein gethürmter Riese, da,
 Wo Finsterniss aus dem Gesträuche
 Mit hundert schwarzen Augen sah.

“Der Mond von seinem Wolkenhügel,
 Schien schläfrig aus dem Duft hervor;
 Die Winde schlangen leise Flügel,
 Umsausten schauerlich mein Ohr ;
 Die Nacht schuf tausend Ungeheuer —
 Doch tausendfacher war mein Muth;
 Mein Geist war ein verzehrend Feuer,
 Mein ganzes Herz zerfloss in Gluth.”

And again in the glad “Mayfest,” where every line
 is a joyous heart-beat : —

“Wie herrlich leuchtet
 Mir die Natur !
 Wie glänzt die Sonne !
 Wie lacht die Flur !

“Es dringen Blüten
 Aus jedem Zweig,
 Und tausend Stimmen
 Aus dem Gesträuch.

“Und Freud' und Wonne
 Aus jeder Brust.
 O Erd ! O Sonne !
 O Glück ! O Lust ! ”

But Sessenheim was not enough ; for this way-wardness of Goethe ceased not with maturer years. That the poet has been his own accuser cannot ren-

der one's censure less severe. For this censure is undoubtedly induced by the feeling that, if a great genius should not need to be governed by the same laws perhaps as the ordinary mortal, this must happen by reason of his rising superior to those laws, not by his falling subject to their jurisdiction and then claiming exemption by a special act of grace. Such censors feel that Goethe's life, despite its great intellectual sweep, does not mirror a moral career correspondingly pure and lofty. To guard an artless maiden against the involuntary deviations of her unshielded heart, to observe not merely the visible and outward, but the invisible spiritual sanctities of betrothal and wedlock, to despise not, even in externals, the righteous formalities of the marriage tie, — this much, at least, may be demanded of that man before whom we are to bow the head. It is this fine "sense of conduct," to borrow a happy phrase of Matthew Arnold, the lack of which many severe Western Puritans deplore in the author of "Stella," and such a lack to them fatally mars Goethe's character.¹ Whether this lack arose from the constitution of society in Goethe's day, or was an innate defect of his own, we shall leave for others to decide. Yet a faithful chronicler of Goethe's early years may not write, as the English Laureate of his friend,

"A passion pure in snowy bloom
Through all the years of April blood."

¹ Cf. *Das Goethe-Jahrbuch*, 1884, p. 237, "Goethe in Amerika."

Nor in spite of Goethe's ardent human praise of woman, and the many exquisite feminine portraits which he has drawn, do we find that reverential and ethereal adoration in thought and act of which types are not wanting in modern literature and life. While conceding, then, the wide sweep of his sympathies and of his intellectual powers, it must not be considered unjust to Goethe to deny him, not moral eminence, but that moral pre-eminence which is the mark of the finest spiritual organizations.

The four years, from 1771 to 1775, between Goethe's departure from Strassburg and his arrival in Weimar, were filled with varied experiences and with the most active literary productivity. It was a whirl of journey upon journey, of friendship added to friendship, of love affair and tender attachment. On one side, Schlosser, Merck, Gotter, Kestner, the Stolbergs, Leuchsenring, Lavater, Basedow, Klopstock, the Jacobis, Knebel, and the Weimar princes; and on the other, Lotte, La Roche and Maximiliane, Fräulein von Klettenberg, Anna Mönch, the Countess Stolberg, and Lilli von Schönemann; while the restless youth ycleped the Wanderer went roaming through the woody solitudes about his native place; or visited the courts at Wetzlar to pursue anything but law; or strayed up and down the Main and Rhine and Lahn, or through the pleasant South-German cities, or into Switzerland and over the St. Gothard; and again from Frankfort setting out for Italy, but turning back at Heidelberg, and onward at last to Weimar.

Equally nomadic, too, his intellectual career. Ostensibly trained for the legal profession, his studies had spread over a far wider field. His note-books at the University disclose an interest in medicine, chemistry, anatomy, physics, philosophy, and general literature. Nor were music and art neglected. "To regard things carefully, to store them up in memory, to give good heed and let no day pass without collecting something, this," writes Goethe from Strassburg, "is what we now have to do." And again: "Jurisprudence begins to please me. After all, it is like Merseburg beer, — the first sip, you shudder, but after a week you cannot do without it.) And chemistry still remains my secret mistress."

His first months in Frankfort give him a distaste for the practice of the law, as well as a prejudice against the aristocratic philistinism of the place. He institutes a Shakespeare celebration, and pronounces an ecstatic oration.

"The first page which I read in him," he exclaims, "made me his own for all my life, and when I had finished the first piece I stood as one born blind, to whom a miraculous touch has in a moment restored his vision. I recognized, I felt most keenly, that my existence was infinitely broadened. All was new and unknown to me, and the unaccustomed radiance pained my sight. I doubted not a moment to renounce the regular theatre. Unity of place seemed to me so oppressively confining, unity of action and time burdensome fetters for our imagination! — And now that I saw how much the men of

rules in their prison pen had wronged me, my heart would have burst if I had not declared war against them, and daily sought to storm their towers."

It was his "Götz von Berlichingen" which led the assault. No cold and stately hero from classic antiquity, but a valiant mediæval German knight, bluff and honest, fuming and fighting, and dying bravely.

Goethe waits for Herder's judgment. "Shakespeare has quite ruined you," exclaims impatiently Herder. "Enough," cries Goethe. "It must be melted down, freed from dross, furnished with nobler material, and be recast. Then shall it appear before you again." It is done, and with the several draughts before us we can watch the work and note the change. At last, a fresh, vigorous drama, or series of spirited dramatic tableaux and staccato dialogue, distinguished by no unity of design nor historic accuracy, but, with all its ragged edges, a healthful, breezy, patriotic outburst.

In 1772 the "Frankfurt Gelehrte Anzeigen," a semiweekly journal, was founded by friends of Goethe, and created a great sensation. He, as well as Herder, becomes at once a collaborator, and a remarkable series of critical reviews is issued. Pungent, racy, epigrammatic, slashing away at all pretence however dignified, dealing fearless censure and whole-souled praise,—we need no acquaintance with the writings examined to appreciate and enjoy the clear view, the bubbling extravagance, the lusty blows,

the wit, and withal the sound judgment which is displayed.

Snatches only can we quote, from the collections of Bernays and of Scherer, for our space forbids longer and perhaps more significant passages.

On a work entitled "Letters regarding the most important Truths of Revelation," he comments :—

"These letters are directed principally against the haughty sages of our century who see in God something else than the penal judge of degraded humanity, who believe that the creature of his hand is no monster, that in the sight of God this world is something more than the antechamber of the future state, and who peradventure even presume to hope that he will not punish to all eternity. We pass by the attacks upon the foes of revelation, which often are blows in the air; the argumentation regarding the history of mankind at the time of the Redeemer, and the many accumulated proofs of Christianity of which one can no more demand than from a bundle of rods that they should all be of equal strength. But we ask all fanatics on both sides to consider whether it be seemly to maintain in a spirit of persecution that what it is claimed is regarded by God as good or evil on our part is good or evil in his sight too, or whether that which is refracted in our sight into two colors may not flow back to him in one ray of light. In this we all agree, that man should do that which we all call good, whether his spirit be a muddy pool or a mirror of beautiful nature, whether he has strength to journey along his way, or is sick and needs a crutch. Strength and crutch come from one hand. In that we agree, and that is enough!"

The following notices illustrate what may be called the summary process :—

“ *Address to his Royal Highness, the Grand-duke Paul Petrowitsch.* Petersburg, 1772. — Alexander used to take a poet along with him, to whom he would give on contract a coin for every good verse and a cuff for every poor one. We trust that this poetic spokesman made other conditions for himself, and we admire the patience and vigilance of the young Duke, if he heard the address through without falling asleep.”

“ *The Brother. By a Lady.* 2 vols. — We desire that this brother may remain the only son of his father; for the work is beneath criticism.”

“ *The Praise of Fashion, an Address delivered and printed à la Mode.* 1772. . . . And also written *à la mode*; that is, as badly as possible.”

“ *Wolf Krage, a Tragedy, by Johannes Ewald, from the Danish.* 1772. — Night, high treason and fratricide, abomination and death, and gloom, horrors, pains of love and pains of dissolution, so that with a devout ‘Heaven preserve us!’ we began to think about going home betimes!”

“ *Lyric Poems by Blum.* Berlin, 1772. . . . We wish the composer a first-rate girl, days of leisure, and the pure poetic spirit, without the spirit of authorship. The best of poets degenerates when he has the public in mind while composing, and when filled more with a desire for fame, especially newspaper fame, than with his subject.”

“ *Enlightened Times; or a Contemplation of the Present Condition of the Sciences and Prevailing Customs in*

Germany. Züllichau, 1772.—A tedious academic discussion. The composer, who is probably quite young, at least quite inexperienced, knows the world only from the four faculties, and must have heard somewhere that we live in enlightened times. Now this vexes him, and so he proves that the philosophers are not enlightened because some still defend the best world; nor the doctors, because so many men die; nor the lawyers, because there are so many laws without lawsuits, and lawsuits without laws; nor the theologians, because they are so obstinate, and because one falls asleep so often when they preach; nor the humanists, because they do not pursue Latin and Greek with sufficient earnestness, make Hebrew so hard, write so many verses, and the like. Enlightened times! If the fellow had only written about the man in the moon, or the polar bear! That was his calling! Any one who presumes to consider our times enlightened again, must read this whole work as a penalty; and he who considers them enlightened because he lives in them himself, must learn it all by heart.”

And finally one more extract, from a review of a work entitled, “A Characterization of the most refined European Nationalities. In Two Parts.” Leipzig.

“Character of refined nations! Throw the coin into the crucible if you wish to learn its worth. From the stamp you will never find it out to all eternity. What then is the character of a polished nation? What else can it be than the reflection of the religion and the civic constitution in which a nation is set; drapery, regarding

which the most that one can say is how it may fit the nation. Perchance a philosophic observer might have produced a tolerable characterization. But the composer complacently made the grand tour through England, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, and the Netherlands, looked into his Puffendorf, talked with fine ladies and gentlemen, and took his book and wrote. Unfortunately there is nothing in all the world more devious than fine ladies and gentlemen, and so his portrayals were also out of focus ; the Englishman he always defends against the Frenchman ; the Frenchman he always contrasts with the Englishman ; the former is simply frivolous, the latter simply strong, the Italian pompous and sedate, the German guzzling and counting up his ancestors. Everything by hearsay, on the surface, an abstract of 'good society.'

"And this he calls a characterization ! What different judgments he would often have passed if he had condescended to view the man in the midst of his family, the peasant on his farm, the mother among her children, the journeyman in his workshop, the honest burgher by his tankard of beer, and the scholar and merchant in his club or *café* ! But it did not even occur to him that there were any people there ; or if it did occur to him, how was he to have the patience, the time, the condescension ? To him all Europe was a fine French drama, or, what amounts to pretty much the same thing, a puppet play ! He peeped in, and peeped out again, and *voilà tout !*"

An important and perhaps somewhat neglected phase of Goethe's earlier years is his attitude in matters of religion. We sometimes hear him called

“the great Pagan,” a shallow echo of the reactionary romanticists and the strict ecclesiastics of sixty or seventy years ago. But the paganism of Goethe, as Heine cleverly says, is marvellously modernized; and if the middle period of his life betrays a drift toward classic heathendom, his youth, like his old age, bears the stamp of strong religious views, and a faith which in these days would simply be termed liberal. His home training introduced him to catechism and dogma, and he was encouraged to report the sermons heard. The New Testament he learned to read in Greek, and the Old Testament in Hebrew. Stealthy hours were devoted to memorizing Klopstock’s “Messias,” —a work which evidently inspired one of his earliest efforts, the poem on Christ’s descent into hell,—and a Biblical epic in prose was partly accomplished. Much in the religious life of his day, and some peculiarities of the official representatives of the Church, did not appeal to his nature, nor did he seem to possess what are called “settled convictions”; but he honored the sacraments, and for many years pursued an independent and sober study of the Scriptures.

A previous quotation has given the tendency of his thought regarding the truths of revelation. In a criticism of the history of Count Struensee’s conversion, he remarks further:—

“Of the worth of a conversion, God alone may judge; God alone can know how great the step must be which

the soul has to take here in order yonder to draw near to a communion with him, to the abode of perfection, and to the intercourse and friendship of higher beings. Thousands of open and secret foes of religion exist, thousands who would have loved Christ as their friend if he had been depicted to them as a friend, and not as a sullen tyrant, ever ready to crush with the thunderbolt where the highest perfection is not found."

Goethe's youthful standpoint is still more clearly indicated in a short publication, dating from 1771, in the form of a letter from an aged pastor to his new colleague. Some people, he writes, find no pleasure in being Christians unless all the heathen are to be roasted forever; but for his part he hurries over that doctrine as over red-hot iron. He has grown old in contemplating the ways of the Lord, and finds that God and Love are synonymous. He has no ground for doubting any one's salvation; it is enough to believe in Divine Love revealed in Christ. Controversy he avoids; it is easier to hold an eel by the tail than a sophist with reasons; the divine nature of the Bible cannot be proven if it be not felt; Augsburg and Dordrecht make as little essential difference in the religion of man as France and Germany in his nature; the confession of faith was a formula necessary in order to establish something, but leaves him his Bible; if one creed comes nearer the Word of God than another, so much the better for its confessors; to force opinions upon one is cruel, but to require that one must *feel* what one cannot

is tyrannous nonsense. Luther labored to free us from spiritual bondage, yet the Romish Church has preserved much of divine truth; suffer it to be, and give it your blessing!

In a word, the essence of Goethe's creed was *toleration*.

It was during this early period that Goethe became at least partially familiar with the writings of Spinoza. Herman Grimm ranks the latter with Homer, Shakespeare, and Raphael as one of the four great minds which had a lasting effect upon Goethe, regarding them as representatives of Greece and Rome, with all the treasures which those names imply and include, and of the Germanic and Hebrew tradition. Goethe acknowledges to Eckermann, in 1831, how well adapted to his own youthful necessities were the views of the great Jewish thinker, in whom he found himself. Unable to distinguish between what he brought to Spinoza's "Ethics" and what he took away, it was yet enough for Goethe that he there discovered that which calmed his emotions,—a grand and open survey of the sensuous and the moral world. But it was the boundless disinterestedness of the contemplations of Spinoza which specially attracted him, as well as the lesson of renunciation, the distinction between knowledge and faith, and the thought of the unity of creation. To these contemplations Goethe repeatedly recurred in later years, and in his old age the "Ethics" was still by his side.

If we seek for traces of pantheistic views in Goethe's writings, we are at first embarrassed by the necessity of defining the term Pantheism itself. According to a recent English historian of this subject, (C. E. Plumptre,) Pantheism, in the generally accepted meaning of the word, is the name given to that system of speculation which identifies the universe with God. This explanation presents a good working definition, allowing the author to trace the presence of pantheistic ideas in various philosophic systems from ancient times. But much depends upon the manner of the identification; and in his summary and conclusion Mr. Plumptre becomes more precise, and describes the form of pantheism which he has been discussing as that which, discarding anthropomorphism on the one hand, and naked materialism on the other, conceives God to be a Power, Eternal, Infinite, disclosing itself alike through every form and phenomenon of nature. It does not identify God with perishable matter; but rather conceives him to be related to matter somewhat as the soul is to the body. More concise is the definition of Dr. Hedge: "God, the creative and ruling power of the universe, distinguished by reason alone from the universe itself." In this sense Goethe, who was the last remove from an atheist, viewing the Finite only as the "living garment" of the Infinite, will be found fully in harmony with the spirit of Tennyson in his profound and beautiful poem styled "The Higher Pantheism."

A discussion of the many proofs of this view which Goethe's works afford, would carry us far into Goethe's manhood and old age. One illustration only may perhaps be permitted, from the "Proce-mion," in 1816:—

“ Was wär' ein Gott, der nur von aussen stiesse,
Im Kreis das All am Finger laufen liesse,
Ihm ziemt's die Welt im Innern zu bewegen,
Natur in sich, sich in Natur zu hegen,
So dass, was in ihm lebt und webt und ist,
Nie seine Kraft, nie seinen Geist vermisst.”

The ante-Weimar days witness only the beginnings of Goethe's growing interest in Spinoza's ethical and pantheistic theories, and of the irreconcilable conflict thereby induced between Jacobi and himself; but we are able to pick out from his letters and reviews of that period, from "Werther," and from those portions of "Faust" which evidence an early origin, fragmentary but significant passages which bear witness to this interest. It was his unfinished drama of "Prometheus," indeed, which, containing seeds of Spinozism, incidentally occasioned the famous colloquy between Lessing and Jacobi upon Spinoza, rousing an extended controversy regarding Lessing's opinions;—a controversy from which the serious study of Spinoza, and the important philosophic conclusions which proceeded from that study, are considered to date.

We have reserved till now any mention of the work which Goethe is said to have rated next to "Faust,"—"Die Leiden des jungen Werthers."

Shakespeare has been quoted by Doctor Bartol as describing the phenomenon of sleep-walking in Lady Macbeth better than any modern physiologist; and recently a prominent German professor of psychiatry has gravely analyzed Goethe's work as an accurate pathological study of a diseased mind. Werther indeed was an illustration, somewhat over-wrought, of his time. He is the super-sensitive soul, whom the rough world only bruises instead of bracing. Disappointment in love, combined with a social affront which cripples his ambition, proves too heavy a burden, and he turns his back upon the world and seeks in suicide an escape. The weak side of Werther — the unhealthy sentimentality in place of healthy sentiment — is specially repugnant to the present age, which is schooled to control, if not to conceal, its emotions; and although the pure and powerful fancy, the righteous wrath against social shams, the warm affection for nature, are fascinating traits in the work to this day, no sound mind can peruse the narration without a continuing inward remonstrance and impatience. This feeling, however, extends not so much to Werther as a creation as to Werther as a character. But it was precisely because Wertherism was then so common a psychological phenomenon that the work gained so enormous a success. The mirror was held up to human nature, and the distorted likeness was at once recognized. The personal experiences upon which the story was based are now common property, and it will scarcely be necessary to

describe in detail the framework of society in which the story is set. The Storm and Stress period forms the background, a period whose leading characteristics indeed are peculiar to no special time or place. In its limited application to the last third of the eighteenth century in Germany, the movement which this phrase describes was a general revolt against conventionality and the restraints of oppressive authority, both in society and in letters. Herder and Goethe are the leaders in literature, the former as a pioneer in criticism, the latter as the embodiment of the poetic spirit. Goethe feels the far-reaching, penetrating agitation, and through his soul quiver and thrill the subtle and potent forces which are at work to fashion the coming era. He gathers up the tangled threads of life, and weaves them into a brilliant tapestry of song and tale and drama, which faithfully depict the universal fortunes of mankind. So Goethe required first experience before he might poetically create. But not solely in order to create. He was receptive, ardent, impressionable, blending warmth of heart with strength of intellect. To the younger Goethe, as well as to the elder Goethe, sweet human intercourse, encouragement, and sympathy were needful. Solitude, save for brief intervals, he could not suffer. He knew little of those heights of loneliness on which the impatient soul of Lessing was so often forced to dwell. For even if his mental outlook was far wider than the glance of most of his associates could comprise, even

if he had often to endure bitter criticism and personal hostilities, his motives and his aims alike misunderstood, he was also assured of ample appreciation, aid, and applause.

Thus he rounds out his first quarter of a century. The principal features of his youthful prime we have here endeavored briefly to sketch, indicating the various influences which shaped or modified his course, and outlining his multifarious mental activity. We have found him in his youth already a perfect lyric poet; for all that follows,—the luxuriant elegiacs, the fresh and natural ballads, the splendid harmonies of “Gott und Welt,” the tender, melancholy yearning of Mignon, the melodious Oriental imageries, the elaborate elegies of Marienbad, the numberless variations of the Faust stanza,—is but a differing manifestation of the same spirit; we find him already penning a warm and vigorous prose, which, pruned and perfected, is to become the standard of modern German; we find him as the author of “Götz” already vying with Klopstock in arousing a national sentiment in the German mind by restoring to his countrymen a consciousness of their manly past; as an essayist and reviewer, we find him already laboring to rebuke vain wordiness and false or artificial canons of taste, to unfetter the judgment and to awaken a catholic sympathy; already in “Werther”

“ He took the suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness clear,
And struck his finger on the place,
And said, *Thou ailest here and here.*”

And finally his masterpiece of "Faust" is growing under his touch and gaining some of its rarest passages. Thus endowed with this potent promise of his brilliant past, we leave him at Weimar, on the threshold of his long and beneficent career in that his final home.

APPENDIX TO "GOETHE'S YOUTH."

IN order to convey some idea of the peculiarities of Goethe's youthful style, the exact text of the letter from which the extract on page 6 has been translated is here given:—

AN JOH. JACOB RIESE IN FRANKFURT.

Leipzig 20. Oktober 1764.

Morgens um 6.

Riese, guten Tag!

den 21. Abends um 5.

Riese, guten Abend!

Gestern hatte ich mich kaum hingesetzt um euch eine Stunde zu widmen, Als schnell ein Brief von Horn kam und mich von meinem angefangnen Blatte hinweg riss. Heute werde ich auch nicht länger bey euch bleiben. Ich geh in die Commoedie. Wir haben sie recht schön hier. Aber dennoch! Ich binn unschlüssig! Soll ich bey euch bleiben? Soll ich in die Commödie gehn? — Ich weiss nicht! Geschwind! Ich will würfeln. Ja ich habe keine Würfel! — Ich gehe! Lebt wohl! —

Doch halte ! nein ! ich will da bleiben. Morgen kann ich wieder nicht da muss ich ins Colleg, und Besuchen und Abends zu Gaste. Da will ich also jetzt schreiben. Meldet mir was ihr für ein Leben lebt ? Ob ihr manchemahl an mich denkt. Was ihr für Professor habt. & cetera und zwar ein langes & cetera. Ich lebe hier, wie — wie — ich weiss selbst nicht recht wie. Doch so ohngefähr

So wie ein Vogel, der auf einem Ast
Im schönsten Wald, sich, Freiheit athmend wiegt.
Der ungestört die sanfte Luft geniesst.
Mit seinen Fittichen von Baum zu Baum
von Bussch zu Bussch sich singend hinzuschwingen.

Genug stellt euch ein Vögelein, auf einem grünen Aestelein in allen seinen Freuden für, so leb ich. Heut hab ich angefangen Collegia zu hören.

Was für ? — Ist es der Mühe wehrt zu fragen ? Institutiones imperiales. Historiam iuris. Pandectas und ein privatissimum über die 7 ersten und 7 letzten Titel des Codicis. Denn mehr braucht man nicht, das übrige vergisst sich doch. Nein gehorsamer Diener ! das liessen wir schön unterwege. — Im Ernste ich habe heute zwei Collegen gehört, die Staatengeschichte bey Professor Böhmer, und bei Ernesti über Cicérons Gespräche vom Redner. Nicht wahr das ging an. Die andere Woche geht Collegium philosophicum et mathematicum an. —

Gottscheden hab ich noch nicht gesehen. Er hat wieder geheurathet. Eine Jfr. Obristleutnantin. Ihr wisst es doch. Sie ist 19 und er 65 Jahr. Sie ist 4 Schue gross und er 7. Sie ist mager wie ein Häring und er dick wie ein Federsack. — Ich mache hier grosse Figur ! — Aber noch zur Zeit bin ich kein Stutzer. Ich

werd es auch nicht. — Ich brauche Kunst um fleissig zu sein. In Gesellschaften, Concert, Comoedie, bei Gastereyen, Abendessen, Spazierfahrten so viel es um diese Zeit angeht. Ha! das geht köstlich. Aber auch köstlich, kostspielig. Zum Henker das fühlt mein Beutel. Halt! rettet! haltet auf! Siehst du sie nicht mehr fliegen? Da marschierten 2 Louisdor. Helft! da ging eine. Himmel! schon wieder ein paar. Groschen die sind hier, wie Kreuzer bei euch draussen im Reiche. — Aber dennoch kann hier einer sehr wohlfeil leben. Die Messe ist herum. Und ich werde recht menageus leben. Da hoffe ich des Jahrs mit 300 Rthr. was sage ich mit 200 Rthr. auszukommen. NB. das nicht mitgerechnet, was schon zum Henker ist. Ich habe kostbaaren Tissch. Merkt einmahl unser Küchenezettel. Hünen, Gänse, Truthahnen, Endten, Rebhüner, Schnepfen, Feldhüner, Forellen, Hassen, Wildpret, Hechte, Fasanen, Austern u. s. w. Das erscheinet Taglich. nichts von anderm groben Fleisch ut sunt Rind, Kälber, Hamel u. s. w. das weiss ich nicht mehr wie es schmeckt. Und die Herrlichkeiten nicht teuer, gar nicht teuer. — Ich sehe, dass mein Blat bald voll ist und es stehen noch keine verse darauf, ich habe deren machen wollen. Auf ein andermahl. Sagt Kehren dass ich ihm schreiben werde. Ich hore von Horn, dass ihr euch ob absentiam puellarum forma elegantium beklagt. Lasst euch von ihm das Urtheil sagen dass ich über euch fällete.

GOETHE.

In a letter to his friend Schönborn, consul in Algeria, occurs a noteworthy passage in turbulent praise of Herder:—

Frankfurt am 8. Jun. [1774.]

Herder hat ein Werk drucken lassen: *Aelteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts*. Ich hielt meinen Brief inne um Ihnen auch Ihr Theil übers Meer zu schicken, noch aber bin ichs nicht im Stande, es ist ein so mystisch weitstrahlsinniges Ganze, eine in der Fülle verschlungener Geäste lebende und rollende Welt, dass weder eine Zeichnung nach verjüngtem Maasstab einigen Ausdruck der Riesengestalt nachäffen, oder eine treue Silhouette einzelner Theile melodisch sympathetischen Klang in der Seele anschlagen kann. Er ist in die Tiefen seiner Empfindung hinabgestiegen, hat drinn alle die hohe heilige Kraft der simpeln Natur aufgewühlt und führt sie nun in dämmern-dem, wetterleuchtendem hier und da morgenfreundlich lächelnden, Orphischen Gesang vom Aufgang herauf über die weite Welt, nachdem er vorher die Lasterbrut der neuern Geister, De- und Atheisten, Philologen, Textverbesserer, Orientalisten etc. mit Feuer und Schwefel und Fluthsturm ausgetilget!

Appended is a short bibliography of works relating to Goethe's youth.

General Subject.

Der junge Goethe. Seine Briefe und Dichtungen von 1764–1776. Mit einer Einleitung von Michael Bernays. 3 Theile. Leipzig, 1875.

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Briefe und Aufsätze von Goethe aus den Jahren 1766 bis 1786. Zum erstenmal herausgegeben durch A. Schöll. Weimar, 1846.

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Herder. By Karl Hillebrand. N. A. Review, July and October, 1872, April, 1873. Vol. CXV. pp. 104-138, 235-287, 389-424. (Reprinted in part as Monograph IV. Bangor, Me.)

Friederike Brion.

Der junge Goethe. (Letters and Poems in Vol. I.)

Dichtung und Wahrheit. (Books 10, 11, and 12.)

Friederike Brion von Sessenheim. Geschichtliche Mittheilungen von Phil. Ferd. Lucius, Pfarrer in Sessenheim. Strassburg, 1877.

Friederike Brion von Sessenheim. (1752-1813.) Eine chronologisch bearbeitete Biographie nach neuem Material aus dem Lenz-Nachlasse. Von P. Th. Falck. Berlin, 1884.

Deutsche Rundschau, November, 1878, pp. 218-226 : Wallfahrt nach Sessenheim. Von Heinrich Kruse.

Goethe's Youthful Reviews.

Der junge Goethe. Vol. II. pp. 405-504.

Studien über Goethe von Professor Wilhelm Scherer in Berlin. Der junge Goethe als Journalist. [In the Deutsche Rundschau, October, 1878, pp. 62-74.]

Goethe's Religious Views.

"Der junge Goethe" and "Dichtung und Wahrheit," *passim*.

[For the later period, see his works in general. Note specially Sarah Austin's "Characteristics of Goethe : from

the German of Falk, von Müller, etc.," (3 vols., London, 1849,) Vol. I. pp. 65-103. Also, "Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens. Von J. P. Eckermann. Sechste Auflage. (Edited by Düntzer.) In drei Theilen." (Leipzig, 1885.) II. 30, 100-101, 200; III. 253-258. In Bohn's translation, pp. 54-55 (passage suppressed by translator), 411-412, 524-525, 566-570.]

Goethe's Stellung zum Christenthum. Von Julian Schmidt. (In the Goethe-Jahrbuch, II., 1881, pp. 49-64.)

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Spinoza and Pantheism.

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II.

GOETHE'S SELF-CULTURE.

BY JOHN ALBEE.

THE theory of education at present is to offer an all-embracing outline of studies, from which every talent may select, may specialize itself, and receive its appropriate training. Universal culture, that is, knowing or affecting a variety of intellectual interests, is not now much encouraged, and is seldom marketable. Even the phrases, "a great scholar," "a learned man," have ceased to carry their ancient significance. And the opponents of classical studies would say it is well it is so; for the terms meant an acquaintance with Greek and Latin and the contents of libraries merely. Scholar, learned man, do not well describe the modern proficient, their successor, whose claim and place can be exactly defined when one inquires, "What does he know?" This was sometimes a difficult question to answer in the case of the former class, when one praised them and provoked curiosity and inquiry. The answer was as vague and general as the supposed accomplishments. Universal culture we no longer encourage in the individual; in the accumulation of studies, in their clear

demarkations and the demand for thoroughness, there is required a more or less close following of particular lines. Universal culture must now be confined in meaning to the possibilities, or opportunities, embraced within the plans and under the teachers everywhere offered, and to their distributed results. The education now most insisted upon is that which qualifies a man to maintain himself by his usefulness to others, — to possess and to be able to apply that knowledge which has its practical value and its equivalent money value, like any other commodity. (You may know too little to be wanted anywhere by anybody; and you may know too much to meet the wants of sagacious employers.)

The bounds of knowledge — to sum up what has been said and to make clearer what follows — have been so extended, and the demand for application is so strenuous, that only by devotion to one single department can a man hope for any degree of completeness or usefulness.

At the same time, this accomplishment in one thing, with its professional or private application, gives to its disciple a limited development which is not in harmony with the highest philosophical or spiritual revelations of the being and aim of man. For man is a unit, a whole, in himself, whatsoever component place he may consent to fill temporarily and with a detached portion of his being. He wishes to know all, grasps at all. He can learn all; but he can teach, can communicate, only a part. Now all

that which cannot be taught, but which every earnest, striving spirit wishes to know and succeeds in knowing through his own power and will, and in his own way, that is, as his genius guides him, I call self-culture. And inasmuch as I speak of Goethe's self-culture, I am anxious that my definition should be considered, in a peculiar manner, as applicable to him, for it has grown out of a study of his life and activities. I hope it is capable of generalization, and useful to every one who has taken his education, his cultivation, into his own hands; but it is beyond the scope of this paper to make applications and draw the obvious moral. It is simply the way which one man, already by natural endowment great, found to supplement a usual education, such as was available in his youth, to pass from known and discovered ground to original, and to satisfy the impulse of his genius. Nor do I wish to lower or confuse the definition of self-culture, by connecting it in any manner with the history or experience of those commonly called self-educated men, of whom we have enough and hear enough; men who struggle up out of the masses, and who are sufficiently honored and wondered at for their striving and their triumph. Self-culture as now to be considered must be held up and measured upon the Goethean plan; and as the sermon ever and anon comes back to its text and the song to its refrain, so must we to the definition, which is to be the clue in studying one chief characteristic of Goethe: all that which cannot be taught, but

which every earnest, striving spirit wishes to know and succeeds in knowing through his own power and will and in his own way,—that is, as his genius guides him,—is self-culture; and Goethe is the eminent and peculiar example of it, and of its most extraordinary results.

It is hard to keep hold of Goethe as a whole, he turns himself in so many different directions. And who is competent to estimate a man who was poet, novelist, art critic, translator, editor, lawyer and councillor of state, dramatist, stage manager and actor, the most voluminous correspondent we know of,—over nine thousand letters known to be now procurable, and one half of them already published,—besides his special scientific pursuits in botany, mineralogy, anatomy, and optics? To some of these departments he added valuable contributions; in some he made original discoveries, and his literary work has become already the property of mankind. All the while, as we read his life as known to the persons among whom he moved, his diaries and letters, we are struck with the attention and time bestowed on private and official concerns, which could leave no profitable results, and which would seem to interfere with the concentration requisite for enduring performances. But for the explanation of the amount and quality of his literary legacy, we must study his characteristic literary methods; and in addition, remember his fortunate circumstances and his long life, productive to the end.

It is claimed, and it is a valid claim, that Goethe's life and work make an epoch in world history. Whether we know it or not, we now see through his eyes when we come to certain points in our studies and experiences. And although unable, and indeed incompetent, as most men are, to follow and appreciate the whole range of his contributions, yet any interested and careful reader can feel everywhere the Goethean characteristic in his style and method; and, more than all, in the comprehensive sweep of his mind, which looks out upon things in a large, infinite way, gathering as it labors on vast materials, overflowing in almost every instance the receptacle he had planned for them. He was almost too great and active a man to be a writer; it is condescension in him to write. After the Frankfort period, he needed urging to prepare anything for print. He was indebted to his friends, and especially to Schiller, for stimulation in this direction. He loved to accumulate, to sketch out plans, to read to friends an incompleting design, and then put it away for more light. Thus all his work seems a means to some other end, — a preparation, — an exploring expedition, returning with abundant results, but how to be finally distributed and arranged, somewhat in doubt; and in fact it is lucky if anything more than a roof is erected over them. Much appears to be unfinished, fragmentary, all sorts of things interjected between the covers of his books; and this not from want of good structural idea, but either because of some

difficulty in keeping within its limits, or because he found no conventional literary form quite adapted to his peculiar genius. So he overflows in all his longer works; yet in his shorter is perfectly restrained and unified.

It was especially hard for Goethe to bring any of his more important books to end, because his accumulations were so large and continuous, and because he filled his writing with his life, which flowed on, and could only be complete by the arrest of life. It must also be remembered that he waited upon his moods, and was not independent of physical aids and hindrances. He used wine and love as stimulants, but not tobacco. He consulted the barometer to know the weather in his brain; and he knew what seasons, sleep, diet, change, and music could do for the mind. However, there comes a time when we can no more rely upon these charming coadjutors. The problem came to the aged Goethe how to complete works which for the most part had been thrown off in periods when his genius was susceptible to outward influences, responding involuntarily and warmly. His solution was that by which most men are obliged to labor from beginning to end, namely, to finish what needed finishing by energy and resolution, no longer waiting upon Muse and season. Still we must say that in much of Goethe's work there were additions rather than completions, and it marks a characteristic trait, the cause of which we have already indicated. The Second Part of

"Faust" is a completion, but not a dramatic completion; it is a religious reinvestment of the whole conception. The Second Part of "Wilhelm Meister" follows vaguely and in a lower atmosphere the same lines; nothing is brought to an issue after the manner of ordinary fiction. In Goethe was the extraordinary sense of the progressive character of all that concerns human life; it appears as merely succession oftenest; and in either case the highest art must deal with it as without limitations. No end is conceivable to it, but only transitions. Thus while Goethe lived the period could be, and generally was, changed into a semicolon; whatsoever conclusion, it was provisional; ceaseless self-culture added chapter after chapter, rewrote, inserted missing leaves, and gave to the god Terminus feet and arms. There should be a dash at the end of most of his writings, to signify that he was interrupted, or was waiting for more light, a new experience, a fresh impulse. This intellectual exuberance was in part the fruit of a habit of self-culture, which accompanied step by step the writings given to the public.

The creative power in him seems to have been exactly commensurate with the opportunities of self-culture; and in the latter we must include, besides various studies, all kinds of personal contacts, experiences, and employments. These came forth again as images, characters, or generalizations, in poetry or prose, and tantalize us at once with their likeness and unlikeness to their originals. And it may be

noticed in passing that he appears to reveal most of the germs out of which grew his literary works. It is true he was a little fond of mystification concerning them, and himself, doubtless, as we all do, connected the image created independently in the mind with some material, actual counterpart subsequently. This, otherwise, is to give to what we call real existences, facts, or even experiences, too much credit. These have no creative power; the mind, the imagination, create them. We may admit only this: that the relation of Goethe's creations to their originals, or beginnings, is similar to the genesis of life. There is a cell of some sort; it little resembles the final form of independent being, which at any other stage than this is perishable.

Goethe was a realist in a certain distinguishing sense; that is, there must be for him firm realities, but such as were intimately interwoven with his own life. He hated the vague, the subjective, and that which attempted to make something out of nothing. He strove for such a universal expression as could not be literally interpreted, but so flexible as to have in it a manifold adaptation. In some degree, favored by the German intellectual tendency to minute and critical study of masterpieces, he achieved in a short space that which time and chance have given his compeers, Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare, — the possibility of many meanings and many applications. He founded himself upon the internal real; so that his realism differs greatly from that which among some

writers is practised and championed in our time. They claim to give us pictures of life as it is, still calling their work fiction. Nothing that does actually, literally exist, is worthy of portraiture. "The spirit of the real is the true ideal"; and this alone is all that man recognizes and cherishes forever.

There is, however, a deeper objection than this to the surface realism of our present literary art. In the moral world, as in the natural, we shall not go far wrong, if we seek for truth and reality in the direct opposite of what appears. The apparent is something adjusted to the measure of the senses. Although Goethe laid strong hold of this apparent, there was for once a man who turned it, not half or quarter, but clear round, and saw the other, the real spirit, or ideal face.

He turned the plant clear round, and discovered its secret, the law of its life. And as ever appearances are confusing, while the reality is simple and satisfying, so now botany, which, when one looks into a text-book or upon a garden of flowers, is the most bewildering of studies, becomes by Goethe's discovery as clear and beautiful as a remembered single line of perfect poetry. In fact it is poetic; and it distinguishes nearly all of his scientific investigation that it is resolved into poetry. He is the first modern man who has well succeeded in working this transformation; thus restoring for us the manner of the most ancient natural philosophers, who rendered everything in verse. It seems to have been his

aim in natural science to satisfy the desire for a productive thought,—one that should be a further means of self-cultivation. His investigations in osteology resulted in nearly the same law as in botany,—a simple principle on which the structure of animals and plants is built up alike. What is its value? Chiefly to the imagination in man. There is no final good in scientific discoveries unless they furnish us something beyond the useful; this also has its value, but not the entire. As Goethe himself said, “Whatever is useful is only a part of what is significant.” When a simple, pregnant generalization, like Goethe’s in botany, is given us, we are not hindered by default of technical knowledge from the highest possible perception of the central idea in the plant world. We no more stand before the simplest flower ashamed of our ignorance because we cannot call it by name; or when we can, satisfied with our knowledge. But there is now freedom for the imagination, and an invitation to reflection. Then truly pansies will be for thoughts; and the “flower in the crannied wall” will answer, not what God and man is, but as much as it knows about itself. And though some flowers recommend themselves by their beauty or rarity, and others by their commonness, and some even because they are fashionable, all of them, when we are acquainted with the law of their inward being, help us to draw nearer to the spiritual symbols and resemblances which connect each province of nature with every other, and all with man.

Goethe teaches us after a method, and to a point where we can teach ourselves. In every direction to which he turned his mind, this is one of his chief merits, that he takes you where you can go alone if you will. This makes him for adults, for poets and writers especially, the most helpful master that has ever lived. How he becomes so is easy to see; it is because he is trying to teach himself; in short, we come again upon his self-culture as the fruitful source of his achievements and influence. His studies and investigations were private, unprofessional, with no worldly or ulterior aim. What he puts into the mouth of Makaria in "*Wilhelm Meister's Travels*" expresses his habit very nearly: "We do not want to establish anything, or to produce any outward effect, but only to enlighten ourselves." When therefore Goethe, a man of ample acquirements and genius, sits down to study something that he wishes to know, and gives us not only the results, but the steps and the method of his effort, he becomes a great teacher.

Yet we do not wish to follow any master too far; he is the best who leads us from himself to self-reliance. A man needs many, to whose influence he can surrender himself, and recover himself again and again. In Goethe's self-cultivation it is striking how often he meets with persons and objects, and gives himself up to them until he has learned all they have to impart which can help him, or discovers his own false tendency or position. Then he aban-

dons them without regret or apology. Without regret, except the poetic, inspiring regrets of his love affairs, which cannot be omitted from the account of the sources and circumstances of his inward culture. In these there were usually two productive phases or periods; one while elevated by passion, the other when tormented by remorse. It is said by H. Grimm that Margaret grew out of the latter. But usually he had no time or taste for repenting himself of anything that had happened. In his self-complacent way he foresaw compensation, and was not afflicted to know all sides of himself, the weak, the strong, the excellent, and the evil. He confessed that his striving to become an artist was a mistake, but added that mistakes also give us insight. This calm, quite superhuman characteristic has prejudiced many good people against Goethe; they think that he sacrificed everybody to his own selfish purposes. The French call love the egoism of two; but some say Goethe's love was still no more than that of one,—self-love, in short.

One of the essential contrasts between Goethe and most literary creators—let us say, for instance, our own Shakespeare—is that Goethe found his material, his suggestions, his impulse, in his own experiences; while Shakespeare and his contemporaries, and also the greater Greek poets, take what has happened to others as the primary motive of their work. Goethe embodies states of feeling, workings of the intellect; consequently they have not that charac-

teristic or historical consistency which is common among other creators. I venture to call their consistency *ideal*; and I would refer its manifestations more to the personality of Goethe than to that of the characters themselves, which in most works of the imagination are made effective by sharply drawn limitations. I do not know a character of Goethe's that stands for much more than his mouthpiece; that one thinks of as a person, as in the creations of many even inferior novelists and dramatists. In truth, one may say, — or perhaps here it is better to inquire whether nearly all the most famous characters of poets and dramatists have not something vague and impersonal about them; while it is left to the inferior to come before us with their impressive, although very limited personality. The great are great without being peculiar, and indeed by contrasts to it; they fill a great place, symbolize the total conception, and must be drawn with a few and the simplest lines; while about them move all manner of subordinates, of narrower yet more striking idiosyncrasies. It is these latter we make ourselves free with; they pass into proverb, yes, into language, and have the honor to become nouns and adjectives.

Goethe wrote in the modern temple, where all the Muses were real women. He transformed them back to their ancient estate. This his temple was of glass, so that the transformation could be seen, the original clay be detected after it was winged. Doubtless other poets, his predecessors and compeers, also drew

much out of their own lives, fashioning their creations out of real, present images; but it is concealed from us by our meagre information concerning their personal history and character. In Goethe's case all is open, all is revealed, by his own disclosures and innumerable testimonies. We know the avidity of the public concerning everything which connects personal affairs with a poem or story, — its liability to mistake, and its haste to censure; and as the world is full of literalists, as well as of those who conceive of all as if existing in the present and among themselves, forgetful that every age "determines and fashions both the willing and unwilling," they hear of Goethe's relations to his time, to its persons, ideas on religion and politics, with some scruples of conscience; their most serious charge being that he immolated, and then dissected, living, loving human beings for the purposes of literary art. It should be remembered that, so far as Goethe's own confessions are summoned against him, they cannot be fully admitted; for he did not confess himself in print until the matter which entered into it had become poetry in its first stage. He used it over and over, and gave it endless additions and transformations. In truth, the literal experience, the actual fact, do not exist for a moment, or but just a moment, in his mind.

In his first attempt at verse, when he was in love with Gretchen, he says he first "mystified himself." You cannot detect him writing anywhere except sym-

bolically. Thus, in working the chief miracle given man to perform in his earthly life, the changing the water which he draws out of the common reservoirs into the wine of song and story, Goethe had a wonderful, almost supernatural power. In tracing back this gift, it becomes clear that it grew out of his genius for self-culture. We can observe that it had a twofold or reciprocal character, not uncommon to all men, but in the highest degree to him; namely, being taught by his own faculties, unconsciously at first, and then in return consciously and earnestly teaching them. It may be said, that when a man arrives at the latter stage, he is free; he, by the same means, liberates others; he becomes a self-determined being, and can wholly exterminate what is obstructive in himself, and perfect what is productive and best. This consciousness becomes distinct gradually; and the interesting point in Goethe's intellectual history is to observe its development.

But now what shall we say on behalf of those lovely, and, as some think, wronged ladies, sacrificed to make the images of Gretchen, Ottilie, Iphigenia, Sulieka, who now seem to have an independent being? Were Friederika, Lottie Buff, Lillie Schönerman, Von Stein, and the others, but the rough stone in which sleeps the statue? or did they breathe, suffer, feel the chisel and polisher of the artist? And which endured most, they or Goethe himself? It is permitted to women to heal themselves by sensible attachments and marriage, which all seem to have

done, with one exception ; while he poetized his woes. It is too much to expect of every man that he shall commit suicide to show that he was in earnest in love. Yet I know of no other course that would thoroughly satisfy the world of Goethe's sincerity and unhappiness. Must we, however, exercise ourselves in passing some kind of judgment in the business ? For this present, all such controversies must be renounced ; and once for all let us summarize the supposed defects of Goethe's nature, which, as comprehensive and yet condensed as we can make them, are religious, domestic, and political.

In conclusion of this element in Goethe's manner of self-culture, that is, the embodiment in imaginary forms and relations of not only actual people and events, but as well his various internal moods, reflections, and tendencies, I will add, that it grew into a habit with him to want to know, first of all, in regard to the productions of other writers, and even scientific labors, out of what kind of personal character and experience they had been evoked. In this, as critic and student, is to be observed his leaning toward the historical and objective method. One might suppose, after all that has been divulged respecting his own way of drawing from his experience and circumstances, that it might properly be called the subjective method, and that he would use approvingly, in describing others, the same term. I shall not insist on the distinctions in the use of these terms by Goethe which I have endeavored to find ; but I

have made the attempt in order to read his critical works especially, and maxims scattered all through his other writings, with better understanding. In the first place, then, there are two essentials to all intellectual efforts and products. These two essentials may be called by several terms; as, broadly, nature and art; or, specifically, reality and imagination, truth and symbol, yourself and the world. These cannot be separated; the objective method does not separate them; but the subjective method undertakes to exclude, sometimes one, sometimes the other. To this must be added that he often employed the term *subjective* in speaking of egotists, mannerists, and dilettants.

The terms *dilettant* and *dilettanteism* grew up alongside of this enlargement of the meaning of art and artist, and were the necessary negative or antithetical expressions. The looser meaning of dilettant is one who amuses himself, or cultivates not too seriously any art, or science, or literature, and does not pretend to success or excellence. He is judged in proportion to his intention, and we give our applause graciously, because it is not demanded of our head, but our heart, in return for a casual pleasure, or because there has been displayed to us some unexpected natural, though untrained talent.

But if the effort be serious, yet a failure; if it make a demand to which we do not, cannot yield, then, in the usage of Goethe, Schiller, and their friends, the effort is dilettanteism, and the agent is a

dilettant. In short, when one undertakes to gain the height, as Goethe said, through admiration of it, but not the steps to it; or feels himself from any impulse, inward or outward, disposed to something for which he has, perhaps, a little, but no effective talent; there is the delineation of numberless individuals who pretend much, who even labor industriously, yet with no praiseworthy results. However, we must not apply these significant words empirically, or too harshly. We have had many single gifts, precious and enduring, from men of this class; and we cannot forget the contributions of many untrained observers of nature.

It is inevitable that Goethe must believe in recovery after never so many false steps and tendencies. Being men out of the earth, going through the world for a brief period, looking forward constantly, and in the crises of life upward, it is necessary we should make our mistakes help us. In the "Annals" of Goethe, which are a sort of epitome and continuation of the "Autobiography," he declares that he meant in "Wilhelm Meister" to delineate the career of a dilettant, whose "false steps may at last conduct to an invaluable good."

One word more of his manner of coming to conclusions respecting the work of other minds. We have recently here, in last year's study of Emerson, been led through various special points of view to one agreeing opinion,—that character was the source of his activities, and that it is reflected in them with few reser-

vations and no pretensions. Always, when we can find no clue to the private life of the great men of the past, we attempt to construct it out of their times, their contemporaries, and the whole personal environment, as far as we can reproduce it. It was this objective spirit in Goethe that made him wish to come into the closest relations with all that interested him, — men, women, and nature. If there was known to him good fruit anywhere, he was not satisfied with eating, but wished also to see the tree that bore it, — its root, its climate, and the soil out of which it had grown. In this way a book became to him something more than a dry fagot of sticks from the still living tree; it became an expression of life, and contributed something to his own living and reflecting nature. Thus he absorbed the large circle of extraordinary persons whom at first he took pains to know, and who at length took equal pains to make themselves known to him, and to communicate whatever they were able. His own account of what we here but hint at must be given, that it may become more clear to the reader:—

“From the standpoint where God and nature had been pleased to place me, and where, next, I did not neglect to exert my faculties according to my circumstances, I looked all about me to mark where great tendencies were in operation and lastingly prevailed. I, for my part, by study, by performances of my own, by collections and experiments, endeavored to reach forth towards those tendencies, and, faithfully toiling upwards, to the level of

the achievements I could not myself have accomplished ; in all simplicity, innocent of all feeling of rivalry or envy, with perfectly fresh and vital sense, I presumed to appropriate to myself what was offered to the century by its best minds. My way, therefore, ran parallel with very many beautiful undertakings, till it would next turn towards others. The new accordingly was never foreign to me, nor was I ever in danger either of adopting it in a state of unpreparedness, or, by reason of old-fashioned prejudice, rejecting it."

On such a text as this confession offers, one might gather together all the articles and story of his self-cultivation. On one point we must here add something, so that we may keep in mind that results were never wanting to complete the full measure of this absorbent genius, to show that the productive kept an equal pace with the receptive effort. The stream of influences flowing to Goethe received in their passage the most earnest inspection ; he took up all that were allied in any manner with his nature, and bodied them forth again in suitable forms, enhanced by art and the fulness of a thus multiplied life. Often he personified a tendency or feeling. This design, which belongs more strictly to confessed allegory, ends in Goethe rather tamely, so far as we look for character-drawing. The symbolical man has a too diversified nature, as well as field of action. I say man, for it is the men in his books that generally fail to live in our memory as independent beings. It is quite different with his women ; they are simple or sensuous ; some

have the elusive feminine charm which no poet before has known how to depict so well; some are the women of men's imagination, who all in his writings turned out so well; others are downright saints, whose spiritual introspections are graphically portrayed. To all these representative types he gave such human forms as well satisfy our love of the beautiful, within artistic limits. Let us listen to his own opinion of his women characters for a moment, in order to mark the difference between his creative method and that of the writers who draw from the life, and beg of us to be pleased to recognize our acquaintance in their gilded frames:—

“My idea of women is not abstracted from the phenomena of actual life, but has been born within me, God knows how. The female characters which I have drawn have therefore all turned out well; they are all better than could be found in reality.”

Mark here the logic of the ideal method, — “*therefore* all turned out well.” Of his men it may be said that they are all also parts of himself, but from a very different realm than his women. In them there is more objective treatment, and yet they are not so distinct. But in all and each may be seen how well he had resolved all his materials into his own life before reproduction.

Man is an imitative animal, is the received axiom and basis of all art. This unconscious impulse accompanies, nay, is commonly the means of setting free, of delimiting, what is nature's particular gift to

each man. Too often, we are aware, it is the finished production, the feeling raised in us by it, that we would at once imitate. The deep-seeing Goethe very early found that not this was the true path of self-cultivation, and a substantial, abiding fountain of literary activity ; but that it might be attained with fortunate circumstances, by study of all previous conditions, and the life and art out of which great masters and their work had sprung, and upon which they had impressed themselves in return. So from early life he began to grasp and to imitate, not the finished works themselves, which would have resulted only in something less than his models and ended in disgust, but the foundations and elementary conditions of a rich, self-developing, and continuous mental activity. This was why he was so receptive ; and being so became many-sided without the usual fatality of accomplishing nothing to justify the name. He was, in truth, both actively and passively many-sided.

But now it should be noted with what certainty he drew back from influences and studies when they threatened to absorb and restrict him. It seems as though he looked upon them all as but preparatory ; a means of cultivation, not an end in themselves. And his peculiar genius led him on to know many things up to a certain limit, rather than the one which always flatters the specialist that it is without limit, because it has obtained possession of him rather more than he has of it. What was this limit

which Goethe observed? Spinoza had shown him the boundary of investigation in respect to divine things; which, it has been often said, had a powerful and soothing influence upon his reflections. Whether it was that early impress, or a native tendency, the limit of the surrender of his mind and interest was reached when the method, the *how*, of nature had been reached, and when the next step would involve a recourse to metaphysics to resolve the *wherefore*.

In a similar manner, in all which he denominated Art he stopped short at the vague, the inexpressible, and the subjective. Even the romantic he thought no adequate expression, because it confused the moral and artistic sense. He must work where there was reality, freedom, such as the Greek outline denotes; and upon that which was not already a shadowy and uncertain symbol, but so universal and inevitable that it could be symbolized in a thousand pleasing and instructive ways. Many a time he abandons himself to a mood; seldom to the formal choice of poetic theme; and he believes that the occasional poem, the fruit of the former, is our best modern poetry, while the latter labors in a vacuum. He yields to personal influences, intellectual and passionate, until they become noxious and are likely to submerge his individuality. And he follows the study of natural sciences as far as the human senses, unaided by microscope, scalpel, laboratory, and prism, can penetrate. Artificial contrivances introduce arti-

ficial relations. But the chief objection, from the standpoint of Goethe's self-culture (which would co-ordinate the visible world with man), to the technical and mechanical methods of investigation, is again this, to which I have already alluded; namely, that in science and in philosophy we should not attempt to search the inaccessible, the great mystery, but keep ourselves on the hither side, where we can labor fearlessly and to some purpose. This, one may well say, is a poet's doctrine; since it gives up one world to his sharpest outward senses, and consecrates the other to the imagination. In Germany more than anywhere else, in Goethe's time, such a belief appeared as the natural reaction from the innumerable attempts of philosophers and theologians to formulate systems which should explain by ratiocination what, having been long accepted by faith, was beginning to be shaken by those inquiries that we now stand in the full stream of. A great deal in "Faust" has a symbolic or ironical reference to the current discussions. These discussions were bold and vehement, and went so near the verge of profanity that a man of Goethe's sense of proportion reacted against them. Fichte's conclusion of one of his lectures, whether true or false, hits off the height of the fashion of philosophical agitation: "To-morrow, gentlemen, I shall create God."

I have said that Goethe disliked all mechanical contrivances for extending the reach of the five human senses. It is well known how much he inter-

ested himself in the theory of colors. He came in the course of his investigations more near to being moved off his usual calm balance than by any other affair of his life. His theory was not accepted, and still is not, save by a few men. Yet who would know Goethe must know it; for even in its supposed errors is more clearly shown than in his accepted scientific observations the longing for, the immense faith in, the unity of Nature and the simplicity of her operations. In optics, as in other pursuits, he would have no aids but the natural eye; and his chief distrust in Newton's theory of colors came from that philosopher's use of the prism in experiments. There is here a curious coincidence in sentiment between Goethe and Keats, which seems to reveal the poetic temperament the same in two otherwise infinitely different natures.

One day, at a merry meeting of poets and artists in London, Keats proposed the toast, "Confusion to the memory of Newton." Charles Lamb refused to drink until it had been explained. "Because," said Keats, "he destroyed the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to a prism."

Nature, as if to reward the poet who would tolerate no mediatory artifices for access to her mysteries, endowed him with a natural second-sight. Still he must deliver what he saw by symbol. Thus were both nature and art satisfied.

The unity of Nature was an early vision, and the last supreme certainty of his old age. This, being

well established in him, became an active, efficient idea. The apparent manifold parts and diverse manifestations of Nature being but adaptations of herself to external mutual conditions, every one was the symbol of the other; and the typical form was that which self-culture and art should bend themselves to produce.

We left behind one Goethean characteristic, of which some mention should be made. This was his special studies as a means of self-culture, rather than for the purpose of becoming a specialist. Just as he released himself from personal influences when he found them like to be overpowering or barren, so in studies he stopped at the point where it would be necessary for going on with one to give up all the others. Had his inclination been other, he would have become a learned professor, or a great authority in minerals, anatomy, and botany; or a poet and only a poet. But he never could lose himself in anything. Perhaps one of the reasons of this, besides the motive of self-culture, was, that though a poet and much else, he was also a critic. Indeed, the chief limitation of Goethe's temperament is, that reflection interferes too much and too often with spontaneity. As he grew older, he became more and more didactic and Orphic. The early fruitage and flowers had been plucked; he now began to harvest the seed-corn. There is something in the oracular wisdom of his maturity which resembles the poetic effect, but we miss the morning-red. The dæmonic

influences of his youth are in abeyance; they are in his cabinets now, strung upon wires. They are moved at length by determination and energy, and help him to complete his unfinished works, where they reappear disembodied and passionless. The apotheosis of that which had lived in him, all glowing, sensitive, creative, took place.

Although much given to symbolizing throughout all periods of his life, and to a reliance upon moods and circumstances, as well as a secret leaning toward poetic superstitions, presentiments and omens, in general he held firmly to realities, and insisted that divining-rods could only be found on the tree of knowledge. As the closing result of these two tendencies he became in prose didactic; and in poetry, there being for him not much else left to undertake, he attempts to reveil symbols in a deeper mystery. In this he still adhered to his life-long habit of leaving one world to action and reflection, the other to invention and imagination. In the former, his treatment and subjects are various and suggestive; in the latter, there are plentiful masterpieces, ample invitations to study. We can make personal applications here and there. Yes, it is plain that Goethe foresaw the needs of this generation, and left some sealed, almost personal messages. These are, I dare say, such as most would vouch Goethe never intended. But a reader who finds no more in any book than the writer intended is a poor reader, or he is reading a poor book. A good book

is the author plus the reader. I say this by way of preparation for the inevitable questionings which must arise in the coming week as to whether Goethe intended all that we shall hear from our speakers in their interpretations. We shall hear profitably what each one finds in which we can all agree. For the rest, the unconscious element, that is in every great work of man's mind, it lies before us like a friendly, rich banquet, where there is enough for all and something for every taste. This unconscious element is no doubt an extensive portion of Goethe, and especially fascinating as it appears in every sort of figurative form. Never believe that in Goethe you are getting your truth without poetry. The naked truth is verily naked, and had better remain in the bottom of its traditional well. Give to it its relations, its adaptations, put it into action and thought, and as it is a liberating, divine thing, it clothes itself in joyful, beautiful forms, and becomes poetry. The higher the truth, the more poetic; and all men prefer illumination, the opening of the intellectual and spiritual sense, to any other light. For it takes them out of their limitations, which higher truth challenges as facts. These a low, earth-dwelling understanding has erected into institutions, social, religious, political, which our study of Goethe may expose and help us to resist.

The sacred treasure, the accumulation of a long life of activity, upon which Goethe turned constantly reflection and imagination in due proportions and

with an infallible discrimination, has been handed on to us in various vessels; some translucent, always visible; some to be seen only in the night, like the castle of Avallon, by the light of certain stars, reckoned lucky in the horoscope of the beholder, under which his vision is clearer in some seasons and epochs of life than at others. To speak without metaphor, if we live, experience, suffer, love, and think, we come in succession to pages of Goethe where, having once been dark, we now find he has left a lamp burning for us; like a friendly host, who divined better than ourselves the hour of our arrival.

As we have said, the unity of nature was Goethe's constant perception; every seeming diversity but adaptation, in whose processes are all the semblances of motive, cunning contrivance, sympathy, sex, motherly forethought, as in the cotyledonous leaf, love of beauty and final purpose. It appears to me he took a lesson here; yielding himself, like a plant, to the external conditions of man's world. But then he reversed the operation, and made all conform to an inward shaping mind. Herein we come to that which distinguishes man from plants and animals, and also, it must be said, man from man; one living wholly in the external, and forever guided and moulded by it; another receiving it, but reacting upon it, and impressing his own inward being in typical forms that draw us from the fashion that passeth away to the permanent and true.

Self-culture, therefore, by means of the external surrender and the internal shaping, is a good part of the philosophy and religion of Goethe. To separate them is a sin in literary ethics, and is to want the philosophical substructure of all creative literary art.

It was in delineating these two aspects of man's nature and destiny, morally considered, that he found man's greatest good and worst evil. Meister blunders, Faust sins, in the endeavor to satisfy themselves with the external world, — to conquer, to possess it. All along they are not sinners, but exceedingly desirous of wisdom by means of self-cultivation; but they have taken wrong roads. This, then, their bungling was their error. And as in Faust we have a new sort of devil, so in Meister we have a new kind of sinner; both much needed to instruct and convict the modern world, hotly in pursuit of every means, culture included, to possess itself of external advantages, to live more splendidly on the surface, to feel, like the fly on the wheel, that they cause all the movement and the dust. Our age had outgrown the interpretations of the good parish priest; Satan did not embody for us any wickedness with which we were practically acquainted, and most vulgar sins were provided for by the law. We needed a more subtle, refined, and familiar devil to affright us, and a corrected catalogue of those errors in which we were involved, scarcely however knowing it, because long without prophets. Goethe came, and having first

taught and saved himself, in a manner demanded by modern life, he then left us the method and the useful precepts.

When we use the words *sin* and *devil*, the implication is too often of some outward act or some incarnation of it; when we find it in French, we suspect a woman not far off. In Goethe it is a little nearer; it has many marks, many metonymic names; but false tendencies and vague, and impatience, negation, egotism are some of them. The great human effort and act is renunciation; the final issue, reconciliation. For these self-culture in its broadest meaning is the instrument and preparation, and its purpose justifies its means.

Whenever the nations of the North, and especially the Teutonic, have reached certain stages in civilization, they have been bowed down under the feeling that there was something wrong in the universe, which it was their mission to set right. Goethe was born into a chaotic time, when this feeling was at its height throughout Europe. He was endowed by nature with a highly organized being, susceptible to every impression, to such a degree that he cherished superstitions in regard to it. As great care is taken that those who can suffer shall, he felt to the full the maladies of his age. He wrought his own cure first, by self-culture, there being no outward helps; then he turned to the relief of others, and became the great intellectual and spiritual physician of mankind.

III.

GOETHE'S TITANISM.

BY THOMAS DAVIDSON.

Two things become clear to men as they advance in spiritual life : first, that there is no rest for the soul anywhere save in the Absolute and Infinite ; and, second, that this rest can be attained only by the persistent and heroic efforts of the soul itself. Although the facts corresponding to these truths are eternal, although the life of the soul, unconscious as well as conscious, is a striving toward the Absolute and Infinite through infinite evolution, the truths themselves come but slowly and late into consciousness, and the former comes much earlier than the latter. Indeed, the former has been impressed by all the great world-religions, as well as by some of the great world-philosophies, whereas the latter is in many quarters, even of the civilized world, counted little less than blasphemy. Looking merely at the Western world, we find that, in the religion of ancient Greece, the greatest impiety of which a man could be guilty was *ὕβρις*, or insubordination ; that is, any intent or endeavor to place himself on an equality with the gods. This we find forcibly illustrated, not only in the

myths regarding the Titans, but also in those related of Tantalus, Ixion, Niobe, etc. To the Greeks, as to the Hebrews, the divine powers are jealous, standing upon their rights and claiming unquestioning obedience, after the manner of Oriental despots. The heaven, as Aristotle hints, is always a copy of the earth, and men's gods are never very much better than themselves. No doubt, both in Greece and in Judæa, there were men who had a nobler and truer conception of the Divine Power, and this conception finally attained currency in that powerful movement called, after its chief promoter, Christianity. Jesus, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;" or, as the revised version has it, "being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God." More clearly expressed, this means that Jesus, though essentially deiform, held that equality with God was not a thing to be obtained by robbery.

It was a great step for men to have come to recognize that they were deiform, and still a greater step to have realized that that form could be actualized, and that they might be perfect, even as the Father which is in heaven is perfect. This view is by no means peculiar to Christianity. We find it repeatedly stated by heathen philosophers in the clearest terms. Hierokles, the Pythagorean, for example, tells us that "each ought to become, first a man, and then a god." It is true that the Hellenic view, having its root in polytheism, is not identical with the Christian

view, which is founded in monotheism ; but the two agree in this important respect, that they recognize the end of spiritual life to be the attainment of the Absolute. The most fundamental difference between the two views is this : that, while the philosophic Greeks held the way to the Absolute to be through the exercise of the speculative or theoretic virtues, the Christian Fathers placed it in the practical virtues, which the Greeks held to be merely the conditions of arriving at manhood. In later Christianity, which is quite as much Hellenic as Hebrew, the two views were united. The motto of the greatest of all the monastic orders, the Benedictine, which, roughly speaking, was founded in the year 500, is, *Ora et labora*, "Pray and labor," — in other words, combine the practical with the contemplative life. As has recently been pointed out in an admirable way by the Bishop of Foggia, St. Benedict combined in himself the practical wisdom of the Roman (he was the son of a Roman patrician) and the contemplative spirit of the Christian monk.

But, besides the above-mentioned difference between the Hellenic and Hebrew views, there was another, hardly less pregnant in its effects. In the Hellenic view, man was destined to attain divinity, if at all, through his own efforts, through self-purification and devotion to that contemplation which, as Aristotle says, "we sometimes enjoy, God always." In the Hebrew view, on the contrary, man was to be raised to perfection equal to that of the Father, in large measure by grace, that is, by a free transient

act on the part of the Divine itself. The doctrine of special grace is an abiding portion of the Christian creed. Christians, therefore, following the example of Jesus, were expected to empty themselves and wait till God filled them and exalted them, while the Greeks were expected in all ways to strive and help themselves. As a natural consequence, the characteristic Christian virtue is Oriental self-abasement or humility, whereas the characteristic Hellenic virtue is self-respect or personal dignity. While the Christian claims nothing for himself, but looks for everything as a free gift from God, powerful and pitiful, against whom he has no rights, the Greek, conscious of his own potential divinity, makes infinite claims, and labors in every way to make these good.

The success of Christianity and the downfall of Hellenism mean that the world accepted the Christian view and rejected the Hellenic. It has done this in large measure, at least in theory, for some eighteen hundred years. Still not altogether even in theory, and very imperfectly in practice. Though the Hellenic spirit slumbers, it does not die.

“The vine-wreathed god,
Rising, a stifled question from the silence,
Fronts the pierced Image, with the crown of thorns.”

At no time has this spirit been entirely inactive; but its mightiest revolt took place in the sixteenth century, in what is known as the Pagan Renaissance, which again was closely connected with the Protestant Reformation. In the former there is an asser-

tion of the rights of the natural, as over against the spiritual; in the latter, an assertion of the rights of human reason, as over against faith; in both, a revolt against the spirit of historical Christianity. In the last three hundred years, Hellenism has been making rapid strides. Freedom is the order of the day, just as submission was in former times, and there can be but little doubt that this tendency will go on increasing.

And it is right and well that this should be so. In spite of all its great worthiness, in spite of its unexampled success, in spite of its manifold adaptation to human weaknesses and needs, the Christian ideal is not a perfect one. It is essentially one-sided, and needs to be supplemented by the Hellenic ideal, which contains elements both of manliness and truth which the Christian ideal lacks. It is in every way more manly for the deiform human being to work out his own perfection by his own free efforts, than to place himself in the position of a dependent mendicant and accept it from another. Moreover, such perfection, even if desirable, is not possible; for perfection is not something that can be imparted or received; it is something that must be worked out through a long series of free acts, and these no being, not even a god, can perform for another.

That the Christian Fathers should have adopted a view at variance with this, only shows that they understood the nature of spirit and of spiritual things much less perfectly than the contemporary

Pagan philosophers. This difference becomes very apparent, when we compare the Christian conception of God with the later Hellenic philosophical one. The Christian conception is still mythological to a considerable extent. According to this, God is still only a large man, with all the finite attributes and passions of man, an individual among individuals, a being who loves and hates, plans and repents. The Greek conception, on the other hand, is profound and philosophical. According to this, God is above all individuality, being its essential correlate and condition. None of the attributes of individuality apply to him. He is neither one nor many, although he is the essential condition of both. He performs no transient acts, inasmuch as time does not exist for him. He is nowhere, and yet everywhere, because space does not exist for him. He is without variation. In a word, he is ; he is that which is. He is not a reality, since all reality is of necessity finite and capable of performing transient acts in time and space. That is what we mean by reality. He is the pure Ideal, of which the attributes are Absoluteness and Infinity. In the material world he appears as space, the prime condition of all corporeal existence ; in the intellectual world he objectifies himself as being, the condition of all thought ; in the moral world he diffuses himself as pure love, or as the good, the condition of all morality, heroism, and self-sacrifice. The sensible manifestation of God was recognized by the early Aryans, when they made Dyâus, that is

Zeus or Jupiter, their chief god ; for Dyâus is merely the open sky, which these early thinkers confounded with pure space. The intellectual objectification of God as Being we find first in the Vedas and in the Mosaic records. In the former we read : "He who established the six worlds, — is he that One which exists in the form of unborn Being ?" In the latter, God is made to speak of himself as *I am that I am*, or as *I am that am*. It is not until after the rise of Christianity that we find the clear statement made that God is Love ; but centuries before that, as early at least as Aristotle, we find what is virtually the same thing, the affirmation that God is the highest good, that is, the object of the highest love.

We thus find that all the three modes in which the Divine Being reveals itself — the real, the ideal, and the moral — have successively and at long intervals of time been discovered, and even stated with almost philosophical precision. Unfortunately, this philosophic statement has never attained currency, but has always been reduced to terms of the imagination. The Infinite has been made finite ; the Absolute, relative ; the Ideal, real ; the Eternal, transient. Dyâus became Jupiter ; *I am that am*, Jehovah ; Love, the angry divinity of Christianity. The truth is, the philosophic conception of the Spiritual and the Divine cannot be made intelligible to the popular mind, which thinks almost entirely in terms of the imagination. Since, however, even the popular mind craves, and, for moral reasons,

requires, some notions of divinity, an attempt is made to accommodate the philosophic conception of it to the imagination. These fanciful conceptions of the Deity after a time recoil from the people upon philosophers themselves, and turn these into theologians, who employ all their efforts in order to make the popular notions of divinity acceptable to pure reason or thought. This is the real source of all that is mythic in religion, as well as of all that is purely dogmatic. It is, consequently, the source of all those systems of religious thought which arise from time to time and become popular in the world; for example, Buddhism, Christianity, Mohammedanism. Such systems, though essentially unphilosophical, and necessarily containing much that is erroneous, are in many ways of very great value. Indeed, it may be said that practically they are of more value than the pure truth would be. The error contained in them is like the nitrogen in the atmosphere, which prevents the oxygen from destroying the human frame by too rapid combustion. But, after all, no religious system whose god or gods are to any degree conceived in terms of the limiting imagination can be perpetual. The error involved will, sooner or later, make itself felt, in thought by contradiction, and in life by disorganization, and then will follow something in the form of a revolt, both in thought and life. The revolt in thought will come from philosophers — not necessarily from propounders of systems, but from men intimately ac-

quainted with the aspirations and intellectual needs of their time, probably from poets or literary men. The revolt in life will come either from men who have suffered deeply from the institutions among which they were born, like Rousseau, or from men in whom the "enthusiasm of humanity" is an overpowering passion, like the inspired founders of the great religions.

It is this revolt against established conceptions of the divine and the institutions founded thereon that we call *Titanism*. But, inasmuch as new conceptions of God are practically new gods, Titanism always seems a revolt against God himself, a violence, an impiety, whereas it frequently turns out to be the very opposite. When such a revolt is crushed, the revolters are spoken of as atheists and traitors; when it succeeds, they may be counted as prophets and religious heroes. As John Harrington puts it,

"Treason doth never prosper : what's the reason ?
For when it prospers, none dare call it treason."

All revolts against the established order of things are due to one form or another of radicalism, — some attempt to secure a more perfect expression of the fundamental being or nature of things. This is just as true of those great religious reformations that have ended in giving to mankind a nobler and truer conception of the divine, and in bringing this conception to bear upon human life, as of those wild revolutions that seek to overturn law and order in favor of anarchy and license. There are, indeed, two entirely

distinct forms of Titanism, just as there were two orders among the mythical Titans themselves. The Titans are simply personifications of the brute forces of nature and the fundamental forces of spirit. The former of these always tend to revolution and anarchy; the latter, even in their revolt against order, to a higher order. The former in man we call the lusts of the flesh; the latter we call the aspirations of the spirit after the Divine, the Infinite, the Absolute. Aristotle (*De Anima*, B. IV. 2; 415^b 1) says that "all things reach out toward the eternal and the divine, and it is for the sake thereof that they do all that they do according to nature." Whatever acts, then, do not tend toward the Divine may be said to be unnatural; whatever acts do so tend, to be natural. All nature, as such, tends to the highest order, to the Divine. At the bottom of all revolutions lies a conception of man as a material being; at the bottom of all reformations, a conception of man as a spiritual being, striving to realize the Divine in himself.

Having thus distinguished the two fundamental forms of Titanism, we may now ask, Under which of the two must we class Goethe's Titanism, — under that of Kronos, who rose up in rebellion against his own nobler offspring, Zeus, in order to restore the world to an older and less spiritual condition, or to that of Prometheus, who rebelled against Zeus, in favor of something more spiritual than even *his* dominion? One may answer this question without

hesitation. The Titanism of Goethe is for the most part the Titanism of Prometheus. And it is so in a very marked and striking way. One can hardly read Goethe's best works without being continually reminded of Prometheus. The similarity did not escape Goethe's own notice. Prometheus was a favorite figure with him, and there is perhaps no portion of his writings in which his own true character comes out more clearly than in the powerful fragment bearing the name of the great Titan. In this we find Prometheus, after having served Zeus for many years, engaged in open, outspoken rebellion against him, and yet enjoying the special favor of Zeus's daughter, Athena, the personification of wisdom. In a conversation with her the Titan says :

“ Hast thou not seen me oft,
In self-elected servitude,
The burden bear, which they
In solemn earnest on my shoulders laid ?
Have I the labor not completed,
Each daily task at their behest,
Because I thought that
They saw what has been, and what shall be,
Within the present,
And that their guidancee, their command,
Was first, primeval and
Unself-regarding Wisdom ? ”

Prometheus has found the limitations of the gods in whom he has been taught to believe. They know no more about the past and the future from the present than he does ; they are blind leaders of the blind, and their blindness is due to the fact that

they are selfish, looking for their own enjoyment, instead of being universally diffused to bless. Prometheus has been able to discover these limitations of the reigning gods, because he has won the love of a younger and nobler divinity, — the *ewig-weibliche* Athena. A declaration of this love on the part of Athena, coupled with an expression of respect for her father, —

“Ich ehre meinen Vater,
Und liebe dich, Prometheus,” —

draws from the Titan these remarkable words : —

“And thou art to my spirit
What it is to itself.
Even from the first
Thy words have been celestial light to me.
Ever, as if my soul spake unto itself,
It opened wide,
And harmonies, born with it at its birth,
Rang forth, from out itself, within it,
And a Divinity
Spoke when I seemed to speak,
And when I thought Divinity did speak,
I spoke myself.
And so with thee and me,
So one, so intimate,
Endless my love to thee !”

Here we find expressed in its most intense and naked form the Titanism of Goethe. It is a revolt against the outward gods of tradition and dogma, the individual gods of the current religion, in favor of the God in his own heart, the God whose kingdom of heaven is within him, who is not distinguishable

from his own inmost being, who is at once wisdom and love and the desire to be utterly diffused in creation and blessedness. When Athena blames his hatred for the gods, and reminds him that they have power, and wisdom, and love, Prometheus replies :

“All that belongs not
Unto them alone :
I too endure like them.
Eternal are we all ! —
Of my beginning memory have I none,
To end I have no call,
Nor see I any end.
Thus am I eternal, for I am,
And wisdom ! —

(Directing Athena's attention to his statues.)

Look upon this brow !
Has not any finger
Fully moulded it ?
And all this bosom's might
Bares itself to meet
The universal danger round about.

(Looking at a female statue.)

And thou, Pandora,
Thou sacred vessel of all gifts
That are delicious
Under the broad heaven,
Upon the infinite earth,
All that e'er thrilled me with emotion sweet,
That in the shadow's coolness
Poured refreshing on me,
All spring delight that ever the sun's love,
All tenderness that e'er
The sea's warm wave
Around my bosom poured,

All that I e'er of pure celestial glow
 Have tasted, or of joy of spirit-rest —
 This all, all — my Pandora ! ”

Prometheus feels that he has within himself all the divine attributes that he knows of, or can conceive, — power, wisdom, love. In only one thing does he seem inferior to Zeus, in that he has not the power to give life to his creations. Zeus has offered to animate them for him, if he will bow down and worship him ; but Prometheus contemptuously refuses any such condition, and Athena, that is, the divinity within him, hastens to assure him that Zeus, whatever he may pretend, has not the giving or the taking away of life in his power. That belongs to a higher power, whom Athena calls Fate. She will herself guide Prometheus to the spring of life, and his creations shall live through him. Prometheus replies :

“ Through thee, O my goddess,
 Shall they live and feel them free.
 Live ! Their joy shall be thy thanks.”

Let us linger a moment upon this word Fate, which the inner Wisdom declares to be higher than the gods, to be the source of life, and to impart that life through the Titanic spirit. The thought expressed by the word is a very profound one, and one that has occupied the attention of the greatest thinkers and poets. Among the Greeks it had many names, corresponding to different aspects of it, *Μοῖρα*, *Αἴσα*, *Πεπρωμένη*, *Εἰμαρμένη*, *Κῆρ*, *Ἀνάγκη* or Necessity. In their minds it generally lay, as a dim, illimitable, inscru-

table background, behind the brilliant array of their numerous gods, as something superior to the gods and against which they had no power. This thought occurs in several passages of the Homeric poems (II. XVIII. 117, XIX. 417, &c.), but is perhaps most clearly expressed in a passage from the third book of the *Odyssey* (236-238):

“The gods themselves have not the power to save
Whom most they cherish from the common doom,
When cruel Fate brings on the last long sleep.”

It is hardly necessary to say that the same thought permeates and dominates the whole of *Æschylus's* tragedy of “*Prometheus*.” *Prometheus*, “the high-spirited son of right-counselled Justice,” is more humane than Zeus himself, and farther-seeing. The conception of divinity embodied in Zeus does not satisfy him. Before his mind floats a higher conception, and he has learnt from his mother, Justice, that this higher conception shall one day be realized, and Zeus hurled from his throne by one “who will find a flame mightier than the thunderbolt.” What is this but another way of saying that *Prometheus* rebels against the external god of the popular fancy in favor of that God whom justice proclaims in his heart? He knows and feels that he is rooted in a power deeper and mightier than Zeus, a fate by whose eternal decree he lives and must live forever. He boasts, “What should I fear, who am fated not to die?” The result is that Zeus is finally compelled to release him from his cruel torment, and to rise to the height of that

ideal which Prometheus had conceived. That inscrutable fate whose mouthpiece is Justice is greater than any god conceived or conceivable in the image of man. The same thought we might easily find, more or less clearly expressed, in many passages from the other Greek poets. We find, indeed, in some of them, and still more frequently in the philosophers, that the impersonal Fate is identified with the highest god, that is, with Zeus; but this does not alter the character of that fate. When Zeus becomes identified with Fate, he loses his capricious, tyrannical attributes, and becomes that which no imagination can conceive and no tongue adequately express,—in a word, he becomes the Absolute and Eternal. For, after all, the Greek conception of Fate or Necessity is, at bottom, a rude conception of the Absolute. The Greeks, as we have already said, were far on their way to a true conception of the Divine under all its forms, extension, being, and love,—when popular Christianity, with its Oriental, mythological concepts, took possession of the world and once more imposed upon it a mythical Deity, conceived in the image of man.

In proportion as Christianity found its way among philosophers and thinkers, the notion of God fostered by it became less and less mythical and more and more philosophical, and, indeed, it would not be difficult to find among the writers of the two great ages of ecclesiastical thought—that of the Fathers and that of the Schoolmen—expressions for the Divine

as philosophical as any that occur in Plotinus or Porphyry. In no case, of course, is the expression adequate; for every expression for the Divine must, to a large extent, be negative.

The attempt to conceive God philosophically is especially marked in the works attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, — the first bishop of Athens and the patron saint of Paris, — works which in reality were produced about the end of the fourth century of our era, under strong Neo-Platonic influences. Here we are told, for example, that “the supra-essential One limits the existing one and all number, and is itself the cause and principle of the one and of number, and at the same time the number and the order of all that exists. Hence the Deity, who is exalted above all things, is praised as a monad and as a triad, but is unknown to us or to any one, whether as monad or as triad; in order to praise the supra-unified in him, and his divine creative power, we apply to him, not only the triadic and monadic names, but we call him the Nameless One, the Super-essential, to indicate that he transcends the category of being.” We might find similar expressions in Augustine and other influential writers of the patristic period. Similarly, in that most famous of all mediæval theological manuals, the “Sentences” of Peter the Lombard, we find it said: “The Trinity is a supreme thing and common to all that enjoy it, if, indeed, it can be called a thing and not rather the cause of all things, or if, indeed, it can be called so much as a cause.”

Similar expressions might be found scattered through the schoolmen, down as late as the time of Suarez, who was contemporary with Descartes.

Dante, whose conception of God was eminently philosophic, tells us that Holy Writ, in condescension to our powers,

“ Doth hands and feet
Ascribe to God, still meaning something else.”

Although Catholic thought, being trammelled by mythical dogmas, could hardly ever have arrived at a perfectly consistent philosophical conception of God, it had made very considerable advances in that direction, when the event of Protestantism once more imposed upon a large portion of the world an intensified mythical concept of the Divine. The popular god of Catholicism, or rather the god of popular Catholicism, a very different being from the god of philosophic Catholicism, became the supreme god of Protestantism. We all know, probably but too well, the conception of God ordinarily held in Protestant churches, and how little it differs from the old Greek popular conception of Zeus. We all know, too, to what an amount of narrowness, bigotry, intolerance, uncharitableness, misunderstanding, oppression, and spiritual pride and deadness it has given rise. We know how compatible it is with almost every form of selfishness and every form of economical and political abuse. The Calvinistic form of this conception has been stated, with a scathing force that can hardly be excelled, by Burns, in his famous “Holy Willie’s Prayer,” which begins:

“ O Thou, wha in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha as it pleases best Thyself
Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
An' no for ony guid or ill
They 've done afore thee.”

Burns too was a Titan, and despised this monstrous God with all his heart.

It was not merely against the cruel and blasphemous conception of God entertained by Calvin that Goethe's Titanic scorn was directed, but against the entire Protestant conception of him, and against everything that followed naturally from that conception. The words which he puts into the mouth of Prometheus, as he sits forming men in his workshop, after having refused all offers of a compromise with Zeus, no doubt accurately express his own feelings with reference to the Protestant conception of God. He says:

“ While I was yet a child,
Not knowing out or in,
I turned my straying eye
Sunwards, as if above me were
An ear to hear my plaint,
A heart like mine
To pity the heavily-laden.

“ Who helped me
Against the Titans' arrogance ?
Who rescued me from death,
From slavery ?
Hast thou not all achieved thyself,
Heart of sacred glow ?

And, young and good, didst glow,
Poor dupe, with gratitude
To him who sleeps above ?

“ I honor thee ? Wherefore ?
Hast thou e'er soothed the anguish
Of the heavily-laden ?
Hast ever wiped away the tears
Of the grief-oppressed ?
Have I not been forged into a man
By almighty Time
And by eternal Fate,
My lords and thine ?

“ And didst thou fancy
I should hate life
And flee to deserts
Because all blossom-dreams
Did not bear fruit ?
Here sit I and mould men
After mine own image,
A race to be like me,
To suffer and to weep,
To enjoy and to be glad,
And pay no heed to thee,
Like me.”

This poem was written in 1773, two years after the heroic radical “Götz von Berlichingen,” and one year before the still more radical “Werther,” in which the worst part of Goethe's Titanic tendencies culminated. “Prometheus” gives us Titanism in the classic world; “Götz,” Titanism in the mediæval world; “Werther,” Titanism in the modern world, or rather in the seething world of the eighteenth century, previous to the French Revolution. Of the

three works, "Prometheus" is the one that represents best the spirit of Goethe's own Titanism, that Titanism which remained with him through life. The hero of "Götz" comes to an untimely and disappointed end, to a death of admitted defeat, through the pressure of outward circumstances. The hero of "Werther" does still worse, for he puts an end to his own life. Prometheus alone remains Titanic to the last, defying, and with impunity defying, all external circumstances, strong in the strength of that divinity which glows with a holy flame in his own heart. And, indeed, from the point of view of poetic justice, this is as it should be. The Titanism which struggles for individual freedom through mere physical courage and strength, without due regard to existing institutions and moral conditions, must necessarily suffer defeat. Independence for an individual baron would be a retrogression toward barbarism and anarchy. On the other hand, that Titanism which seeks personal satisfaction in passive sentiment, however refined, instead of in rational activity, must not only necessarily fail, but must end by making life worthless to the person who attempts it. He needs no outward circumstances to destroy him: the outraged god within him will be quite sufficient for that. Prometheus, whose delight is in creative activity, in loving obedience to the Divinity within him, can alone safely and defiantly carry out his Titanism to the end. Naught can touch him who himself gives up all.

It is a significant enough fact that the drama of "Prometheus" was never completed, much as the central figure was a favorite with Goethe. And the reason of this is curious. Goethe himself somewhere tells us that his different works represent stages in his own culture, and that the completion of each work marked the completion of the stage. No doubt his individual Titanism ended with "Götz," and his sentimental Titanism, in large measure at least, with "Werther." But his Promethean Titanism never ended, until the last day of his life. It was an abiding fact in his life, indeed perhaps the most important fact in it, the source of all other important facts. But Goethe, whose spiritual progress was very rapid in those years, could not but soon come to see that the conflict between Prometheus and Zeus, the envious thunderer, could in no adequate way express the depth and extent of his own Titanism. Zeus could not be made to do duty as the conservative Philistine God of Protestantism, and Prometheus could not be made to represent all the forms of opposition which had to be directed against that God.

So Goethe, after writing two brief acts (and part of a third) of his "Prometheus," abandoned it, and in the following year set to work upon another theme, in which he must have felt that his own Titanism could be much better embodied,—a theme drawn from the annals of Protestantism itself,—the story of Faust. This theme had several advantages over the other, besides modernness and adaption to Goethe's

own state of mind. It enabled him to show the gradual growth of the true Titanism, out of the many forms of false Titanism, to develop its positive and beneficent side, instead of its negative and defiant side, and to depict the nature of its ultimate triumph.

In "Prometheus" the narrow jealous Zeus, the god of popular fancy, still reigns supreme, while the Infinite God "whose throne is in men's hearts" occupies an unrecognized position of patient defiance, moulding men after his own image. In "Faust," on the contrary, the inner, the Infinite God is already supreme lord of heaven and earth, seated in power among the cherubim and seraphim, while Zeus, or the god of narrow selfishness, is relegated to a small sphere in the affairs of human kind. He is, in fact, "*der kleine Gott der Welt*," the little god of the world, or rather of worldliness, who, as Mephistopheles says, "always remains of the same fashion, and is as queer as on the first day." To be sure he has a glimmer of heaven's light,—even Zeus had that; but he uses it only to be more beastly than every other beast. The Supreme God, on the contrary, the Lord, so far from being jealous of any one, can afford to tolerate the very devil, and even finds a use for him. His amenity is so great as to surprise that dignitary, who remarks, at the end of his interview with him, that

"It is quite handsome in so great a lord
To speak so kindly with the devil himself."

The dethroned divinity, the god of worldliness, does not appear anywhere in the poem as a distinct person, nor indeed does the Supreme Divinity, except in the Prologue. The Deity, who reveals himself in the conscience, and the little god of the world, who for the most part directs human institutions, alike appear only as tendencies working silently. The former shows his power by continually preventing Faust from yielding to the allurements of Mephistopheles, the latter appears in the form of official religion, which finds its most striking embodiment in the Astrologer at the imperial court. This dignitary is ready at once to enter into close alliance with Mephistopheles, even when the latter plays the part of court fool, so much so, that, when asked how things look in heaven, — “Wie sieht's am Himmel aus?” — he replies in a mock-serious, meaningless speech whispered into his ear by Mephistopheles.

The difference between the relative positions of the great and the little deity in “Prometheus” and in “Faust” really marks the difference between the relative positions of conscience and human law in ancient and modern times. In ancient times, the laws of the state and of society, both written and unwritten, were held to be superior to the individual conscience, whose exercise in opposition to them, as in the case of Sokrates, could be regarded only as *ὕβρις*, insolence, or insubordination. In modern times, on the contrary, it is universally held that conscience, when sane, has a higher claim than any human decree.

It was doubtless this fact among others that made Goethe select Faust, rather than Prometheus, as the representative of his own Titanism. It must be remarked, too, that Faust's consciousness of the Supreme Divinity is at first very slight compared with that of Prometheus. He appears in all his splendor to the latter from the first, in the person of Athena, and draws forth his most ardent love and consequent activity. Faust is hardly conscious of him at all, except as a vague feeling that somehow directs him in the midst of his dark strivings. The Lord says to Mephistopheles, speaking of Faust:

"Though but confusedly he serves me now,
Yet will I soon conduct him into clearness." •

Goethe's Titanism, then, is Prometheanism, only with the relative position of the two deities, the great and the little, changed, and the vision of the former dimmed in the soul. Whereas Prometheus lives to obey the Supreme God, whom he knows and loves, and is, therefore, supremely happy in his defiance, Faust toils on in darkness, seeking the vision of this highest God, whom he finds at last, when he reaches the philanthropic position (*φιλάνθρωπος τρόπος*, as Æschylus says) of Prometheus. Though Faust is by no means Goethe, yet Faust's problems are those which most profoundly occupied the mind of Goethe. Goethe's life, with all its activities, in so far as they had his own approval, was a Titanic struggle against the god of the world, under the inspiration of the God whom he felt in his own soul, and whom he

recognized as speaking out of the very depths of being, with the voice of Fate and Justice, which in the last result are one. The conception of this God which we find in Prometheus is not materially altered in Faust, except that in the latter more emphasis is placed upon the fact that the wisdom which speaks with authority in the human heart and intellect is also Lord of the universe. Further we cannot go; at least, further Goethe could not go. He deprecated all attempts to define God as a person, or as anything else. When Margaret asks Faust concerning his belief in God, the latter replies:

“My darling, who dare say,
I believe in God?
Mayst question priest or sage,
And their answer seems to be
But mockery of the asker.”

And when Margaret persists with

“Then you do not believe?”

Faust replies in the much admired speech, of which I shall quote only a part:

“Mishear me not, thou gracious countenance!
Who dare name him,
And who confess
I believe in him?
Who can feel
And have the courage
To say, I believe not in him?

“Doth not all crowd
Into thy head and heart,
And pulse in everlasting mystery

Invisible, visible, beside thee ?
Fill full thy heart therewith, in all its bulk,
And when in feeling thou art wholly blest,
Then name it what thou wilt,
Say bliss ! heart ! love ! God !
I have no name
For it ! Feeling is all ;
Name is sound and smoke,
Beclouding heaven's glow."

This speech has been very much admired, as embodying the highest conception of divinity possible for man. I think it is the highest conception of divinity to which Goethe ever attained, and the one under the influence of which he played the Titan against the God of popular tradition and worldliness. But it is by no means the highest conception of God, and its limitations mark Goethe's own limitations, and the defects in his Titanism. Two elements, and perhaps the most important of all, are omitted, — truth and right, — in one word, holiness. The God of Faust, who is in the main the God of Goethe, is not a moral God, and Emerson was entirely right when he maintained that Goethe was incapable of a surrender to the moral sentiment. The simple fact is, that the moral sentiment, pure and simple, found no utterance in Goethe's heart, and hence could not appear in his God, who was but the bearer of the utterances that were found there.

It may perhaps be objected, that it is unfair to attribute to Goethe a conception of God put into the mouth of Faust at a time when that hero was still

far from God ; and this would be correct, if it could be shown that Goethe ever attained to any higher conception. Such, however, I have not been able to find in his works or in his life. Faust himself attains to no riper conception, even in heaven. We find many instances in which Goethe shows his comprehension of the divine nature, by declaring it to be in things, and not outside of them, and by refusing to define it in the imperfect forms of speech. In a short series of poems called "*Gott und Welt*," he writes :

"What were a god that pushed but from without,
And let the world about his finger spin ?
God must be one who moves the world within,
Nature in Him, Himself in Nature holding,
So that what in Him lives and moves and is
May never miss His power, His spirit never."

And again :

"There is a universe within the soul,
And hence all nations laudably permit
Each man to call the best he knoweth God,
Yea, his God, to deliver to Him earth
And heaven, to fear, and, if he can, to love Him."

In "*Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre*," in speaking of the three forms of reverence, (1) for that which is above us, (2) for that which is below us, (3) for that which is on a level with us, he says : —

"These three produce together the true religion. From these three reverences springs the highest reverence, reverence for oneself, and this again is the source

of the other three. Hence man arrives at the highest of which he is capable, by being allowed to consider himself the best that God and Nature have produced."

In 1813, writing to Jacobi, he says: —

"I, for my part, with the manifold tendencies of my nature, do not find one aspect of the Divine enough. As a poet, I am a polytheist; as an investigator of nature, I am a pantheist, and both in the same degree. If I require a personal god for my personality as a moral being, that also has been provided for in my mental constitution."

This last is perhaps the most explicit declaration we have of Goethe's theological belief, and it is a most important one, as showing the character of the Divinity under whose inspiration he played the Titan against the popular Divinity of his time. This Divinity is conceived as above number, equally capable of being conceived as one and as many, as occasion may require. In so far as he is a person, he is identical with Goethe's own personality, the very inmost core and essence of that. The notion of an individual, personal God, existing outside of him, Goethe rejected with the utmost scorn, and in so doing returned to the philosophic position of developed Hellenism, — to the position of the Neo-Platonists, — as opposed to the mythical view of Christianity, and especially of Protestantism.

It has often been said that Goethe was a Pagan. Even his biographer Düntzer gives him this appella-

tion. This is not only correct, but it is correct in a deeper sense than is generally known. We have seen that the three forms under which the Divine has been conceived are space (or extension), being, and love. These appear in Christian theology in the mythical forms of the Father, who is being, the Son, who is space, the condition of creation, and the Holy Ghost, who is love, the source of all action in the world, as even Empedokles saw. The aspect of the Divinity which most struck the Hebrews, and which, consequently, is uppermost in Christ's teaching, is that of being, or of the Father. Now, it is just this aspect of him that is the ground of morality; for morality has its foundation, not in extension or in love, but in the very depths of being. Even love itself has a moral significance only in so far as it is distributed in accordance with the recognized exigencies of being. For this reason the Hebrews were pre-eminently a moral people, a people ready to bow before the authority of the Divine, a people, when at their best, obedient even unto death, for the sake of the right. Job can say (I quote from the revised version): "Behold, He will slay me; I have no hope; nevertheless, I will maintain my ways before Him. This also shall be my salvation." (xiii. 15, 16.) Now it was just the moral aspect of Divinity that was wanting in Hellenism. The Neo-Platonists were careful to say that God was above being (*ἐπέκεινα τοῦ ὄντος*), and hence above the good. In saying this, they thought they were honoring Him; but in truth they were losing

the moral aspect of Him ; for the ground of all morality is being. The immoral is simply that which contravenes the essential laws of being, that which strives to be and cannot.

This failure to recognize God as being and as the ground of morality was the essential weakness of Hellenism from first to last, although, as one might have expected, it was formulated only when that system was near its close. Movements formulate themselves only at their close. Goethe then, in being a Pagan, as he was, failed to see the moral aspect of the Divine. He saw it as omnipresence and as love, but not as authority. His highest god was not the absolute right and good ; it was rather the beautiful. Nay, it was not even the highest kind of beauty, that which moulds a life

“In loveliness of perfect deeds
More strong than all poetic thought.”

It was rather the half-sensuous beauty which is capable of being expressed in symmetry and rhythm, the two forms in which harmony displays itself in space and time. Calm, serenity, balance, freedom from strife, from *Sturm und Drang*, — these were the attributes of that perfection which Goethe aimed at, and which therefore was his God. The still, adamant strength which speaks out the truth without thought of consequences to self, that courts strife as the life of the world, that is so strong as to be ready to accept suffering unflinchingly, which seeks satisfaction in service and self-diffusion, — this was not Goethe's ideal.

Goethe was an artist, his spirit and temperament were those of the artist, not those of the martyr. Like an artist, he labored for finish, for completion, which has a term; not for perfection, which stretches away into the eternal. He saw what was in process around him and divined a good deal more; but that which lay behind the process he did not see. He saw evolution, but caught no glimpse of that which evolves. In one word, he lacked what Parmenides called faith, the vision of the eternal, of that which is, of God. He could see some of God's relations, — those to art, nature, and his own personality, — but God himself he could not see. Hence in Goethe there is none of the martyr spirit. The thought of dying to make men holy, or even to make them free, could never enter into his calculations. He wished to make his own life a complete poem, finished and harmonious in this world, and it was for the sake of this harmony that he demanded renunciation of the discordant elements. The utter renunciation of self, of the natural self, in order to find a self that is above nature, above process, individual, yet infinite and perfect as the Father which is in heaven is perfect, was a state of mind he could not rise to. He could not, in a word, combine Christianity with Hellenism, which is the problem of our time, but remained essentially Hellenic. The god in whose name he titanized was still an imperfect god, a duality, not a trinity.

The reason why Goethe failed to find the highest God, when men like Dante, that mightiest of the mod-

ern Titans, succeeded, is not hard to discover. It lay partly in his own temperament, which was sensuous and made heavy demands. It lay partly in his education, which did not go far to curb that temperament and subject it to divine law. But it lay also in the philosophical atmosphere of his time, in the clouds of Spinozism and Kantianism that went to darken the atmosphere. Say what it may to the contrary, modern philosophy from Descartes to Spencer is atheistic in the deepest sense. It is essentially a philosophy of process, not of being, — of genealogy, not of ontology. Now God, essential being, is just that which lies outside of all process, that transcends all evolution, that imparts all movement, but does not itself move. We may call other things God, — the process of events, the current that makes for righteousness; but in doing so we are idolaters, setting up the idols of our imagination for God. And the idols of the imagination are far worse gods than the graven images of men's hands. When the pure intellect and its object, essential being, are banished from philosophy, God and the true ground of moral being will soon be banished from life, and false gods, or no god, will soon take His place.

But, besides the three causes mentioned as preventing Goethe from attaining to the highest consciousness of Divinity, there was still a fourth, — the direction of his studies, which was toward nature and the emotional or sensuous side of spirit. Goethe rather despised logic and metaphysics, the sciences

of pure spirit, but these sciences had their revenge, as they never fail to do, and as his own Mephistopheles, as conceived in his youth, knew that they did.

“ Only despise intelligence and science,
The highest powers accorded unto man !
In things of glamour and of magic let
Thyself be hoodwinked by the spirit of lies, —
Then have I thee at once without condition.”

Of course, no one would think of saying that Goethe fell a prey to Mephistopheles, or that he was a bad man. On the contrary, Goethe was a good man, in very many senses a great man: he was a Titan, trying to steal divine fire to better human lives, and in a large degree succeeding. But, after all, it was not the purest fire that he stole, but a fire dimmed with the smoke of sweet incense.

Let us now try to sum up the character of Goethe's Titanism, and to show wherein it was manly and beneficent, and where it fell short of the highest. Its greatness consisted mainly in this, that it warred against the external enslaving god of tradition and conventionality, with all his belongings in the shape of human institutions, and did so in the name of the internal, freeing God whose kingdom is within us, whose being is our being, who exists in every human soul, making us one with the Father and capable of being perfect as he is perfect. Its shortcomings were all due to the fact that Goethe was unable to conceive this inner God in his full majesty of absolute insight, love, and diffusive power. And this

inability again was certainly due to the fact, that in Goethe himself the inner God was not revealed in all his majesty. Only the pure in heart see God, and this for the reason that the heart is the eye where-with God is seen.

But though this is strictly true, it must be admitted that Goethe struggled manfully during his long life ✓ to remove the film from his eye, and obtain a clearer and ever clearer view of the Divine. If he did not at any time entirely succeed, that was his misfortune, in the garb indeed of fortune, rather than his fault.

And this leads me to say a word of the different stages of Goethe's Titanism, which I have intentionally left to the end. It is generally said that it was confined to the early part of his life, and practically ended with his visit to Italy. Now in a certain superficial sense this is true, but only in a superficial sense. It was considerably transformed before he started for Italy; but it did not altogether cease at any period of his life, though it tended ever more and more to become a compromise. The "little god of the world," under the influence of the great God, has become much wiser since the days when Zeus sent Prometheus to the limits of the world, to be riveted to a rock and to have his liver torn by vultures. He now not unfrequently takes the new Prometheus into his service, and makes them privy-councillors, thus rendering them in large measure innocuous and obtaining from them much good for themselves. To drop metaphor, Goethe's persistent good fortune, in

the course of time, tamed and soothed his Titanism and ever made him more desirous of finding a reconciliation between the world-spirit and the supreme inward God. This tendency assumed the form almost of homage to the world-spirit in the later part of Goethe's life, especially during that reactionary period which followed the excesses of the French Revolution, when men, wearied with Titanic struggling and in a measure cheated of its results, turned back with a kind of pathetic fondness to the obsolete systems of the past, seeking for rest anywhere, even in a monastery. It would be wrong to say that Goethe at any time proved a traitor to the highest God, and did homage only to Baal; but that he was deeply affected by the reactionary spirit that prevailed during the last decade of his life, there can be no doubt. More and more he became averse to Titanic revolution, more and more in favor of quiet evolution. He disliked the volcanic theory even in geology, and said that the Protestant Reformation had disturbed quiet evolution (*störte ruhige Bildung*). This tendency becomes apparent more or less in all that he wrote after Schiller's death, but especially in the closing scene of the Second Part of "Faust." Here, in the summing up of his greatest work, a work begun in the Promethean spirit, some sixty years before, he altogether abandons the Titanic position, and seems to revert to the submissive attitude of Roman Catholicism. Faust reaches heaven, not by his own efforts, and by bringing the reigning Divinity to terms, but

by the help of good angels, conceived as the Middle Age conceived them, and by the levitating power of the purified spirit whom he had once wronged. He not merely effects a reconciliation with the popular God, but he makes entire submission to him, allowing himself to be carried to heaven, like a mediæval saint from the cloister. No doubt Goethe allowed Faust, as a man of the sixteenth century, to do things which he himself would not have done; but there can be no doubt that, as Goethe became an old man, his early Titanism tended to lose itself in compromise and even submission. "The wise indifference of the wise" unfortunately often takes this direction.

But, after all, this tendency in Goethe's case is not a matter for surprise. His Titanism had not at any time been of that kind which imparts perfect satisfaction to the Titan, and can therefore endure forever. In that Titanism there was always an artistic and somewhat sensuous element of self. He could never entirely surrender himself to the God within him, in utter self-forgetfulness, careless of happiness. He is said to have asserted, with some pathos, toward the end of his long and marvellously fortunate life, that he had never, in all that life, known more than an hour's happiness. This shows what he had been seeking for, shows the defect in his Titanism, shows why it ended in compromise and submission. It shows also why his literary work is, after all, so fragmentary, and why many of his contemporaries condemned him as a renegade to progress and humanity.

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Had Goethe, in the days of his early Titanism, seen God, the inner God, as authority, as being, and not merely as omnipresence and love, the case would have been different. No compromise would have been needed, the want of happiness would not have been felt, his works would have had the glorious unity of the "*Divina Commedia*," and he would have been recognized as the uncompromising Titan, the manifestation of Very God.

The truth is, Goethe wavered between the Christian spirit and the later Hellenic spirit, without ever being able to unite them, for the reason that he never seized either in its purity. This union is the great problem of our time. To reject the outer god of mythology, and all his works, — to cling to the inner God, who is the very life of our life, the self of our self, — to crush out mercilessly the little temporal self in ourselves, in order that the great, the eternal, the divine self may be free to manifest itself, — that is our task; a task to be performed titanically by ourselves and by none other. There is no salvation anywhere but in our deepest selves, no light anywhere but in the hidden shrines which we call our own souls. No outer God, with the best of wills, can save us; for salvation means being strong in and through ourselves. It is a poor charity that pampers weakness, instead of making strong, that tries to make dependents, suppliants, and thralls, instead of free, pure men and women, obedient only to the laws of that kingdom of heaven which is within them, and striv-

ing to be perfect, as the Father which is in that heaven is perfect.

That Goethe did not attain to this point of view is a matter to be regretted, but not one for which we can afford to blame the great poet. For many a long year he struggled manfully, with all the power that was in him, against the aggressive blandishments of good fortune, which continually reinforced the smaller self in him, and, though he did not altogether conquer in the end, he has left much work that will go far to help others to conquer. For such help, and such help alone, one man can give to another. He can point out the whither and the why of a religious life, and make it clear that there is no ultimate blessedness save in that uncompromising Titanism which fights in the name of the inner God of truth and love and right, — above all, of right.

IV.

GOETHE AND SCHILLER.

BY CYRUS A. BARTOL, D. D.

“Words are good, but they are not the best. The best is not to be explained by words. The spirit in which we act is the highest matter. Action can be understood and again represented by the spirit alone. No one knows what he is doing while he acts aright, but of what is wrong we are always conscious.” — *Wilhelm Meister's Indenture*.

THE authorities of the Concord School of Philosophy demand of me to measure the incommensurable, to compare a literary accident with an intellectual necessity, to make an equation of an event with an element. To group and paint on one canvas two so unlike characters and incomparable minds were a rash attempt, which yet must share its presumption between the assigners of such a trust and the incompetent assignee, however unduly bold the latter may be in handling it, giving less his reasons than impressions leading to the conclusion that the genius of the two foremost German poets is too diverse for any common scale. Goethe's superiority is not in degree, but in kind. They lie together; so do Chamouni and Mont Blanc. Schiller might have been or not,

Goethe must have been. He was a necessity. He was hewn out of the rock he proceeded to hew from. He re-created the language his tongue lisped in the cradle. He reconstituted the nation of which he was born. To take out Goethe were to take out Germany from modern history. Napoleon, who said he found but two men in Italy, found but this one in Germany, and bluntly said to him, "You are a man," as he said to his military staff, "There is a man." But how little Napoleon dreamed that the man he nodded this compliment to would by his thinking and writing so unite his divided and distracted country as to be the prophet of Bismarck and Moltke, and, as the Jews fancied of their Elias, reappear after a generation, and in turn overcome the empire Bonaparte transmitted to his dynasty, at Sedan and the gates of Paris, within full sight of the conqueror's tomb! Goethe was denounced as no patriot because he did not personally withstand the invader, but declared him too strong to resist. He was blamed that he did not seize the trumpet and throw away the harp. He replied, that military songs might be composed by Körner amid the neighing of horses, but not by himself sitting in a room. "When I was in love, I wrote love-songs; why should I write songs of hatred when I did not hate?" His contribution to freedom was his thought, and every word from his pen, though no summons to arms. That in aught beside the doctrinary devotion to native soil, which is so cheap on the Danube or the Merrimack, Schiller surpassed him, does not appear.

In the purely intellectual realm, they are to be rather contrasted than compared. Schiller's poetry is regular, often magnificent in its bursts; Goethe's is inspired from the universal law and order, as much part of nature and human nature as the landscape is of the world. Schiller has a fine plot, with able and admirable execution. He produced pieces adapted to the stage. He has more personal ambition and ingenious contrivance to compass, by managing the public, his literary ends; knows how to play the game, and instructs Goethe in it, when they become a sort of business firm and a literary coalition against common foes; but a deeper than any aim at popularity, or wish to win or please had the elder companion,—too great to be a compeer, above being rewarded, and scorning to be bribed or pre-empted; witness to the truth of things, advocate of the universe, with but from his Creator a retaining fee. Schiller's verse is clear and sweet, and shows a rare constructive gift. He excels in the speeches he puts into his heroes' and heroines' mouths. He is quotable in many a splendid passage. His printed oratory is superb. But declamation is for the hour, and its platform does not abide. Eloquence, below the supreme pattern, cannot endure the test of pewter types. It is an effervescing glass, to be drunk at the moment. It is manna, that will not stand over to the next day.

It is not lack of reflection that sets Schiller in the second rank. Rather his philosophy entangles and drowns his Muse. Nor is a basis of fact in his

compositions the want. He is historical, as for a singer he is metaphysical, to excess. He is not the warbler that Goethe is, and has not the pitch. Goethe is as the bobolink that flies and sings at once, its transporting music subsiding into a short chirp as he lights on a bough, or fence, or swaying stem in the field. No master, ancient or modern, more triumphantly than Goethe has cloven the atmosphere of our common breath with lyrical airs. Of the transcendent bards, Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, he is the last. Homer — be it said without offence to the traditional father of song — begins to look gray with the world's longevity and the antiquity of letters and religious myths. Dante is supra-mundane, vexed with Italian feuds, provincial in his scope. He loves Beatrice and other divine creatures, with the Supreme Head; but he hates many men and spirits, for whom he fashions his dread converging circles of the pit. He makes his *Inferno* his masterpiece. He spends himself on that, — and more on the *Purgatory* than the *Paradiso*; writes the sentence "No hope," as the frontispiece of hell, and throws the earth into eclipse with the awful shadows of other spheres. Shakespeare and Goethe are the two great poets for the modern mind, for humanity, for the hour that is coming and that now is. Goethe posts the books up to date; insists that everything shall be natural, real, and true, present to the faith and experience of mankind. Milton treats us to stately and sonorous lines, that march in

perfect step. They are as an army at whose even and solid tread the earth trembles, while banners flaunt and sounds of drum and trumpet pierce the air. But his manner is more than his theme. He surfeits us with fabulous celestial doings, fancied diabolical rebellions, extra-terrestrial battles, and *feux d'artifice*, pyrotechnics, however by the tragedy they illustrate made sublime, yet shot off to accompany a theology that no longer can fit our condition or content our moral sense. The Satan he shows issuing from the far-off under-world portals for his travels, with brave equipment, to compass the ruin of a distant planet, precursor of all Alexander-like conquerors, Goethe with a drop of ink depicts in the shape of a poodle, starting up in a study or a street, let in or out at the corner of a diagram, dressed and talking like a gentleman, up to all the tricks of trade, plausible and persuasive as any huckster or broker, a dealer in jewelry, ready to enter a maiden's chamber, captivate a duenna, spur to a quarrel, and lay down on any counter the coin for the price of a human soul. He lives next door, and is at our own and our neighbor's service. We suspect his lodging in our breast. Ever since Goethe wrote, in all lands we say of any cunning man-shaped devil he is a perfect Mephistopheles. Demons, angels, or mortals Goethe makes familiar spirits, domesticates and plants them on the earth. Natural or supernatural, they are always real; and many of Schiller's characters beside them are as stuffed fig-

ures of tradition, or paper silhouettes cut by metaphysical scissors.

Goethe's gold brightens, Schiller's lacquer tarnishes and fades, with use. Why are the moth and rust at work on compositions which the school-girls thirty years ago were mad over, Don Carlos, Marie Stuart, the Robbers, and William Tell, while Wilhelm Meister, Elective Affinities, Hermann and Dorothea, multiply their constituents and strengthen their hold, and, as readers appreciate, are insured against accident? Schiller has fared better than Goethe on the play-house boards; but the world is the stage on which Goethe's men and women are players of his *dramatis personæ*, the scene being life, and society the panorama unrolled. Goethe knew good work, and therefore did it. He said, I thought I should have done some things differently from Shakespeare, but soon learned what a poor sinner I was, and that he is Nature's prophet: and Goethe is the same: Faust and Hamlet coequal in date, although, in the Second Part of Faust, Helena can never be popular even among scholars.

The women are alike good from the English and the German draughtsman, however honestly either acquired his skill. Margaret and Mignon are not copies of Ophelia or Desdemona, and their colors are as fast. Shakespeare did not, perhaps could not in his lordly age, glorify like his successor a humble peasant lot. Both were close to nature, witnesses faithful and true; and Goethe is the chief example

in history of critical and creative faculty combined. Art, he says, consists not in making beautiful descriptions, but in describing beautiful things. Without being intimately present for a long time with a special object, he adds, the artist cannot succeed. With Schiller rhetoric prevails over reality. He is a performer whose expression is sacrificed to his technique. "The Song of the Bell" is a fine poem; *Wallenstein* and *Thekla* are noble characterizations, but fashioned by conventional rules. The author lacks the artless graces, knows too much. Goethe, with all his skill and information, obeys the genius he does not pretend to understand or guide. "I prefer," he says, "that the power which works in and through me should be hidden from me. I have never thought about thought. I have metaphysics enough to last me for life." Nature to him is God's anteroom and audience-chamber. He does not try or expect to reach the Sovereign Presence by climbing up some other way, or presume at the King's shoulder to dictate or suggest, but humbly pores over his handwriting to peruse or spell it out. He is as physical, as much of a naturalist, including the soul, in his poetry as in his science. When Schiller complains that a lecturer had shown Nature not in her unity, but in specimens and bits, Goethe eagerly expounds to him that unity in the metamorphosis of plants, each portion as a transformed leaf. Schiller replies, that this is not an observation but an idea. Goethe rejoins, that he is glad to have eyes to behold such

ideas in nature. He says, "When I look, I see all there is." So he saw the topmost vertebra expanding into the skull, and the seven colors as mixtures of light and shade. Schiller did not consider that we can see, with eyes, only what the frame of nature tends to. Newton does not see the fall, as an apple, of the sphere : Kepler does not see the planetary approximations, nor Darwin the animal evolutions : they see indications and draw conclusions which the facts and motions require. Nature refuses to be caught in the very act. Goethe saw the live robe of God which the earth-spirit weaves ; and he held all the bright and dark yarn in some extra pair of hands. He portrays man, the living, moving body of the race ; not, like our Emerson, the individual mind or the Holy Ghost alone. Emerson spins a thread, Goethe weaves a web. Emerson snatches a trumpet from some angel's grasp, Goethe greets us with an orchestral symphony. Emerson fetches the top-stone of a monument or pinnacle of a temple before the structures are reared and ready ; Goethe builds from the ground with vast and complete design. Emerson arrives a pilgrim and stranger after long sojourn in a foreign land, angelic visitor from some heavenly sphere, and, shrewd though he be, gets but half-acquainted with this world ; Goethe is native to the soil, and knows every earthly mother's son and daughter by heart. None higher in aim than Emerson, more a prince among the fine spirits that have lighted up this earth with a celes-

tial gleam: none more true to his call, which was not, like that of Shakespeare and Goethe, to set forth this human membership which we are. He is a soloist at the concert, his performance slenderly related to the choir. He imperfectly appreciates the functions of church or state. He gazes at Goethe as an antelope, gazelle, or camelopard might at Behemoth or the great Pan. He is the zenith which from a scornful altitude surveyed the nadir and the poles. Yet Emerson draws from Goethe.

“And e’en the grass shall plot and plan
What it will do when it is man,”

comes after Goethe’s encouragement to the Proteus Delphis in “Helena,” —

“Through myriad forms of being wending,
To be a man in time thou’lt rise.”

So hard it is to be original. The last shall be first and the first last. Emerson and Darwin are anticipated, exceeded, and included by Goethe. The most generous of admirers, Emerson notes the merits of his senior contemporary without justice to his supreme human representative claim.

“Faust,” the crowning product of the nineteenth century, is to his dainty mind a disagreeable book, as if a poem, epic or dramatic, could be made of the leavings when all the sad and dark passages of the world-tale should have been erased; the critic not seeing that it is only against the facts or materials of the tragedy that his objection holds. He complains that

Goethe neither surrenders himself to the torrent of inspiration nor devotes himself to the absolute truth ; cares for art for the sake of culture, and is not even an artist because not incorporating all the matter of his pages in artistic form ; the censure from other quarters being that Goethe is artist too much with determination of blood to the head at the cost of the heart. Puritan clashes with cosmopolitan. Emerson writes to Carlyle, "Goethe can never be dear to me"; and, in his "Representative Men," that he can never be dear to mankind. Sterling wrote to Carlyle that Goethe is not to be loved, and Carlyle cries back, "Who has the right to love him?" "Goethe was a wicked man," exclaimed a lady lecturer ; and a bad man he was long before pronounced to be by a Cambridge orator, who describes him as inwardly felicitating himself on the rich accession to his artistic domain from discredibly precious experiences, and deriving material for poetry from sufferings wantonly caused. That moral worth is essential to intellectual success was the orator's point, which he declared he would not give up for a hundred Goethes, — as if the earth had not labored in bringing forth one ; and that it was too soon to conclude that Goethe as a man of letters does succeed ; that the love and enthusiasm of the German heart ran to Schiller, the true, earnest, whole-souled man with his great, glowing, outpoured heart. Forty-one years are gone since this conscientious prevision, and time as yet gives no backing to the seer, who did not foresee. Time cannot be so cheaply subsidized

and suborned. Time seems to be of the opinion, that a man may have faults or defects, or commit immoralities, as Moses and David and Solomon did, and as in some way and measure all men, the harsh judges included, do or may have done, and yet not be reckoned as refuse for the dunghill; but repent and be pardoned, even be exalted, like him who slew the Egyptian in a passion, or like the Hebrew Psalmist, or his son, with his bitter-sweet proverbs for part of the canon; or like St. Augustine, head father of the Church, when a boy; or, to take illustrations from our own day, like some platform speaker, Christian professor, or occupant of a presidential chair. The condonings of history make a strange chapter when mixed with the decrees of the moral sense. To say that Goethe gloated over the sin, while he gathered up the lesson, is a calumny. Sin would play all of us a worse trick than it does, if we learned nothing from it. Shall we revile Peter for turning with beautiful petrification his inconsistencies into a rock, or Paul for making fuel of his persecutions to kindle his devotions to super-heat? When we assail David for his fifty-first penitential Psalm, issue of his adultery, it will be in season to attack Goethe for the pathetic strains that accompany or follow his unhappy slips of like sort. Stones will not be so plenty and at hand if the innocent, who are never known to throw them, are commissioned to cast the first. "That," said the visitor, pointing to a picture on the wall, "is a St. Cecilia." "No," replied the lady, "a Magdalen." "Pardon

me, my eyes are so poor," he answered, "I cannot tell a sinner from a saint." An ill opinion of human virtue exaggerates, both in individuals and the community, the sum of sexual vice, till a malaria of suspicion confounds the general virtue, and covers like a baleful fog the land. Goethe, born with immense susceptibility, bred in an atmosphere which French license and German sentiment mixed for his breath, and becoming like a city set on a hill, erred too often and conspicuously to be hid. History must mark him, not as treacherous or insincere in his affections, but volatile, inconstant, lacking that consecration whose mutuality between two persons, man and woman, is the right, duty, and glory of both. But it demoralizes society to decide that the unmarried may not have friendships as pure as they are dear.

Great men are too scarce to be thrown away, even for grievous faults. Consult proportion in what you judge. Measure the mountain, as well as the rift in its side. We accept vast benefits from and for them own our debt to Webster, Hamilton, as factors and benefactors; and to Samuel Johnson, mournfully confessing, "Ah! I have not lived as I ought." Schiller's record appears to be free from this particular blot, to which, by his cleaner or less passionate constitution, he was not exposed. But how his loyal wife befriended Goethe, and promoted confidence in the two identified homes! But Schiller's early pen left some stains; and he had sins, of as deep a dye as his friend's, in the jealousy which made him say of

Goethe, "This man stands in my way"; in the ambition which proposed his own honor for his object, as well as, if not more than, the common good, and the indirection with which he sometimes brought his purposes to pass, — in contrast with Goethe's simplicity, royal generosity, and the modesty with which he accepted criticism of his own writings for more than it was worth. His ability at such a multiple distribution as he made of his own heart is a flaw. The two parts of God's image whose sundering is sex tend, run, fly together, and collisions occur. The ever-womanly draweth us on; the ever-manly too, what woman will not add? But desertion of another, even for the sake of one's own supposed destiny, is a crime; and doubtless there are eyes fine enough to see where Goethe's work suffered for his mistake.

Among the appreciators of Goethe, why such warmth in Thomas Carlyle, a man so pure, so slow to praise and quick to blame? Was it that he found in Goethe, for once, no sham, but a veracity without parallel in the literary guild, — words like those nails in the Bible by the Master of assemblies fixed, fastened, driven in a sure place, written on an iron leaf, — and an originality unmatched in this age? We can find a touch of Carlyle and of Emerson in Wordsworth, in Thomas Browne, and in Montaigne. But, says Dr. Hedge, Goethe lighted his torch at the sun. Perhaps Carlyle, resembling Goethe in his truthful testimony, admired also what he wanted himself, and never quite attained, the serenity of the great author, as if he sat

in the star Sirius with a pen reaching to the earth, — from the subjects he was identified with so wondrously remote! But he was wicked? No, such an altitude as his is impossible for a bad man! Satan, the Devil or evil one, is restless, goeth up and down, seeking whom he may devour. Says Miss Shepherd, author of “Counterparts,” — “Show me poetry of a bad man, and I will show you wherein it is not poetry.” The impartial, disinterested justice with which such authors as Shakespeare and Goethe enter into the characters they depict, or without comment impale, like Izaak Walton loving the bait he fished with, is goodness.

We are preached to or at by essayists, as well as from the pulpit; but open the books of these poets, and we are in the midst of people, a swarm of our fellows, as kindly dealt with as by Him that made them, as equitably treated as all will be at the last bar on the judgment-day. Inordinate passion turns to poison with the ingredient of a lie. O political or clerical fornicator, beware of that! A Cato or Brutus, stern patriot, severe moralist, professed philanthropist, Goethe is not. “As for wind and sun, and the good of the human race, let Heaven take care of them to-day as it did yesterday.” But good he pre-eminently is. His heart, said Jung Stilling, which few knew, was as great as his head, which all knew; and his wisdom born of the heart amazes us as a new Book of Proverbs. His “Apothegms” was the one volume Emerson took on his journey. When

the creation was finished, God said, It is all good. So says Goethe. He accepts the situation, and he is master of it. He does not quarrel with the world, that sits at his easel, more than Stuart or Reynolds with their models. He is an optimist, and would let all people into heaven, with the goats not on the left hand. Had he not thought it worth his while to draw, as the Lord did to shape, goat or sheep? He delights in Spinoza's pantheism. He is not a reformer. He fancies things and folks to-morrow will be very much as to-day. He copies for approval into his journal the Latin motto of Thraseas, "Who hates vice hates mankind," and subjoins a maxim of his own. Our vices and our virtues grow from one and the same root. Whatever else he may or may not be, he is not malignant. He comprehends, and does not exclude. Schiller is vehement and diplomatic. Herder is morose. Goethe may be stiff, but never loses his grand benign balance, only exceptions to his theory of colors irritated him a little in his old age. Let "The Sorrows of Werther" and "Götz of Berlichingen" attest that his calmness, what carpers call coldness, was acquired! Vesuvius *has* overflowed, with whatever vineyards the sleeping volcano may clothe its sides. Only inward harmony could beget songs classic as Pindar and simple as Burns, — some dear image being with him in the fairest spot.

"Dearest Lili, if I did not love thee,
How transporting were a scene like this!
Yet my Lili, if I did not love thee,
What were any bliss?"

“Alas ! the gentle bloom of spring no longer
Cheereth my poor heart ;
There is only spring and love and nature,
Angel, where thou art.”

Some other heart was always in his breast, though those looking on knew it not, and from his love for the prototype of Ottilie he bears the arrow long sticking in his own heart. Whatever the transgressions in whose shame the so-called victims, whose victim he was, partake, and however excelled he was by Schiller in the home-integrity, which is a cornerstone of the commonwealth, Goethe's temper was goodness to every creature that breathes, from an instinctive piety with which the child of seven rears an altar to the Deity, as before he is eight he writes German, French, Italian, Latin, and Greek. His disgust is loud at the horrible tapestry, from the history of Jason, Medea, and Creusa, with which, as an unwilling portent of her fate, the French artists salute the young queen, on her way to Paris, Marie Antoinette. He is no coward. To cure himself of sensitiveness to painful sights and of a tendency to giddiness, he ascends the dizzy cathedral-top, witnesses hideous surgical operations, as Dickens got over sea-sickness by a score of resolute crossings of the British Channel. He ploughs on foot through the snows to the Furca, and seeks the smell of powder, feels the cannon fever mid flying balls on the battle-field. To call him dissolute is not to describe such a man. He is religious, believes in God and immor-

talities, reveres the Bible, bows before Christ, refuses, chief scientific genius as he was of his time, to admit a scientific basis for religion, it being its own; a naturalist, he sees in nature more than can be reduced to natural laws, even an infinite beauty and unspeakable charm. He repents where he has been misled, and, in "Elective Affinities," deposits sad experiences, he says, as in a burial-urn. He judges that the sentiment of faith concerns us more than the object on which it is fixed.

In his account of Fräulein von Klettenberg, he gives us a record of private worship equalled nowhere out of Holy Writ, although he imagines somewhat self-conscious in such homage as she renders; and he playfully assures her he considers the Deity in arrears with him, and is called a foolish fellow for his presumption by her purified lips. In all his immersion in the Kantian philosophy, in which Goethe also wades and dredges, Schiller discovers no more of the substance of God than was revealed to the flitting fancy of his envied rival unawares, who found the proof of Heaven, a belief which was its own evidence, in the action of his soul. If he was for a while the pleasing sinner he calls Philina, he was no sour saint. He puts into Faust's mouth a doxology, ascription to the Most High which no hymn-book can vie with, expounds a threefold reverence in a way to instruct every theologian; and, making prayer justify itself, dispenses beforehand with Mr. Tyndall's hospital-gauge. Do the next

duty, renounce, worship sorrow, are his lessons. The priests cannot keep his offerings out of their contribution-box, however they bluster their condemnation on his head as they carry it round. His mental hospitality in cordially accepting, after Schiller's half-honest aversion and backbiting coquetry and his own Olympian vows, the inferior man of letters to his friendly glowing embrace, to receive from him not very important encouragement and advice, is demonstration of radical magnanimity. When Schiller, ten years his junior, is sick, he is troubled, anxiously inquires, divines from the silence of those around him that the end has come, says Schiller is dead, covers his face with his hands, and laments an irreparable loss. In the delirium preceding his own death he sees a bit of paper on the floor, and asks why so careless as to leave Schiller's letters in that fashion lying round loose, — his affection, as the living wave ebbed in his bosom, showing its unsounded depth.

In England the man who has rated Schiller highest and studied Goethe most is Thomas Carlyle. It is like the praise of Sir Hubert Stanley when he makes Goethe of modern literature the head. Schiller was but the Mercury to that Jupiter, with whom Carlyle might be in some sense and measure a competitor had he become as peaceful and sunny as he was strong; could he have spoken the *Yea* of his own "Sartor Resartus" and left behind him the everlasting *No*, to learn the power of ideas as well as of will, and to perceive how mighty Goethe was, not in tak-

ing a partisan side in whatever affair was in question, but in thinking it all out and with glad content; not wishing to be brilliant, doing justice in his portraits to things and persons the most dull and commonplace, but genuine in every way, because he discerned how the repetition of forms and phrases ossifies the organs of intelligence. Goethe was a son of the morning; he wrought as the elements, he changed the climate and emancipated the human mind. Carlyle wielded the hammer of Vulcan, struck Cyclopean blows, and heated, to fashion anew and better, the old metal of the earth's annals. Standing round the strong and sweating craftsman, we feel like boys in whose faces fly the sparks and cinders from the blacksmith's forge. But, as he looks up, his honor for the unfallen German Lucifer is not less trustworthy by reason of the limits of his own position. He especially delights in the easy and airy style in which by his superior the miracle is done. But let me give specimens, such as translation of German into English allows. Take Mignon's death-song, in her gala attire, as she declines to be undressed.

“Such let me seem till such I be, —
Take not my snow-white dress away !
Soon from this dusk of earth I flee
Up to the glittering lands of day.

“There first a little space I rest,
Then wake so glad to scenes so kind ;
In earthly robes no longer drest,
This band, this girdle, left behind.

“ And those calm shining sons of morn,
They ask not who is maid or boy;
No robe, no garments, there are worn,
Our body pure from sin’s alloy.

“ Through little life not much I toiled,
Yet anguish long this heart has wrung ;
Untimely woe my blossom spoiled,
Make me again forever young.”

Lynceus, charged by Faust with neglect of warder duty when Helena arrives, explains his dereliction : —

“ Let me kneel and gaze upon her,
Let me live or let me die,
Pledged to serve with truth and honor
The god-given dame am I.

“ Watching for the morning, gazing
Eastward for its rising, lo !
In the south, my vision dazing,
Rose the sun, a wondrous show.

“ Neither earth nor heaven-ward turning,
Depth nor height my vision drew ;
Thitherward I gazed, still yearning
Her the peerless one to view.

“ Eyesight keen to me is granted,
Like to lynx on highest tree ;
From the dream which me enchanted
Hard I struggled to be free.

“ Could I the delusion banish ?
Turret, tower, barred gateway, see !
Vapors rise and vapors vanish, —
Forward steps this deity.

“Eye and heart to her I tender,
I inhale her gentle light ;
Blinding all, such beauty’s splendor
Blinded my poor senses quite.

“I forgot the warder’s duty,
I forgot the entrusted horn ;
Threaten to destroy me, — Beauty
Tameth anger, tameth scorn.”

Let me add the “Chorus of Nymphs”:—

“He draweth near !
In mighty Pan
The all we scan
Of this world-sphere.

All ye of gayest mood advance,
And him surround in sportive dance.
For, since he earnest is and kind,
Joy everywhere he fain would find.
E’en ’neath the blue o’erarching sky
He watcheth still with wakeful eye ;
Purling to him the brooklet flows,
And zephyrs lull him to repose ;
And when he slumbers at midday,
Stirs not a leaf upon the spray.
Health-breathing plants, with balsams rare,
Pervade the still and silent air.
The nymph no more gay vigil keeps,
And where she standeth, there she sleeps.
But if, at unexpected hour,
His voice resounds with mighty power,
Like thunder or the roaring sea,
Then knoweth none where he may flee.
Panic the valiant host assails,
The hero in the tumult quails.
Then honor to whom honor is due,
And hail to him who leads us unto you.”

In a different strain, like Tennyson before the time, is "Peneios surrounded by Waters and Nymphs":—

"Sedgy whispers, gently flow,
Sister reeds, breathe faint and low;
Willows, lightly rustle ye,
Lisp each trembling poplar tree."

Goethe knew himself. He could measure himself. When some of the Romanticists preferred Tieck, he said, "I speak freely, I did not make myself; it is of no more use to compare Tieck with me than if I should compare myself with Shakespeare." This latter comparison, however, with a greater nature than his, some scholars in Germany make; and consider Faust a more commanding peak to observe human life from than Lear, Othello, or Macbeth.

Goethe, like Thackeray and Victor Hugo, tried sketching as well as writing, as Michael Angelo was painter, sculptor, architect, and poet, and Leonardo da Vinci could turn his hand to any art, painter, sculptor, architect, engineer. But there is a law against coveting. Rare is success in more than one calling. The Apostle Paul would not go beyond his own into another man's line of things. God and Nature grudge us any perfection. It might be too much for hope of progress without end were there a man who did not lack, and need eternity to mend.

Schiller is the poet of a section and season; Goethe, of ages and the world. In personal relations, not intellectual merits, they meet. The putting their names together in a lecture, for one theme, reminds

me of the Soothsayer's talk with Antony in Shakespeare's play.

"*Ant.* Say to me,
Whose fortunes shall rise higher, Cæsar's or mine ?

"*Sooth.* Cæsar's.
Therefore, O Antony, stay not by his side.
Thy demon, that's thy spirit which keeps thee, is
Noble; courageous, high, unmatchable,
Where Cæsar's is not ; but near him thy angel
Becomes afear'd as being o'erpowered; therefore
Make space enough between you."

I see Schiller in his customary pacing about in his composing-room through the night, rousing himself to his stint with some stirring of exercise as he spouts a passage and resorts from time to time to the stimulating draughts at his side ; and I find cause for whatever may be strained or unnatural in the literary result. Goethe is started from healthy slumber by the Musagetes, which he celebrates, the flies that bring the Muse as they buzz and sting. Schiller thunders and lightens, Goethe brings music and light. Michael in the "Prologue in Heaven" describes the swift destructive storms, and adds, as if to hint Goethe's genius,

"But, Lord, thy messengers revere
The mild procession of thy day."

If they *think* not, Landor tells us, the gods stride and thunder in vain. We have declaimers and decorators enough ! Goethe is a continental upheaver, a world-force ; not by reason of his knowledge alone ; but, to adopt Horatio Greenough's title for one of his marbles,

by the genius of love. Supreme in self-love he has been called. A man working so hard for near fourscore years, he felt entitled to another body. Is the Creator selfish, living in what he creates, losing himself in his works, making the smallest creature large enough to eclipse Himself, wearing a veil which he cannot, like Moses, put off, — making all nature glow with the presence no burning bush can bound, and conscious only in his children's souls? I stand with some awe before the likeness realized by a human author with the Divine, when I see that he exists, as no egoist can, in *his* offspring, and that the least and lowliest of them is as dear to him as any duke or pope.

Ideality is neighbor to Benevolence on the phrenological chart. So we speak of the good Homer, because by a sympathetic imagination he gives all his gods and men, goddesses and women, a fair chance, which from poets alone the latter as yet have had; and from no poet more than Goethe, not better even from Shakespeare. With what just spacing his pencil draws! We have a sense of room in all his work, as when we read in the Book of Genesis of the succession of days and dividing of the firmament, — and what an observer he is of the sphere he projects, never getting himself into his own object-glass as a mote or blur! Yet he surveyed himself apart as a natural curiosity. The guests are many, the entertainment great, the host unseen; and the keeper of this vast inn for the weary foot-sore humanity of yet to

be reckoned generations is not evil, but good ; but of being a perfect model of righteousness he comes short. We have heard much of what is called the artistic temperament as explaining, if not excusing, fretfulness and self-indulgence as besetting sins. Charlotte Cushman said to me, in palliation of an artist's errors, " Artists do not take the moral point of view." But certainly she did. Washington Allston needed no cloak of charity. We read no list of exceptions for bards or actors in the law from Sinai, or the larger code of good news. The moral constitution cannot be nullified. God is no respecter of persons. Gifts enhance obligations.

Goethe is one of the magi or wise men. He says, only by knowing others can one know himself. But only by loving others as he did, can we know them. The best knowledge goes with loyal love. Cover him, as Othello begged of Emilia, Gratiano, Lodovico, and Cassio to be protected !

" Speak of me as I am ; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice : then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well."

Must we not say not *well* enough ? Could Johann Wolfgang Goethe, the youth, have cast his own horoscope, or could he have known to what a Brocken of witch and will-o'-the-wisp certain paths would lead, and could he have seen his own image magnified on the screen of time, he might not have had always the same choice of things on which, in his demeanor, the light should fall.

In his drama or broad farce of "Mitschuldigen," the Fellow Culprits, all sinners in divers ways, of whom was he thinking for his characters but the race of mankind, of us all who pass sentence on him? Says Lear to Gloster, "Change places, and, handy dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief?"

"Compound for sins we are inclined to,
By damning those we have no mind to."

The just disclosed letters of Goethe are said to present his social loyalty in a more favorable light. On the sliding-scale of iniquity we can never for individuals anticipate the ultimate decisions. A certain act, word, spirit, we may condemn: the actor, speaker, person, we dare not doom. As the poet Burns tells us, we can know what is done, not how much is resisted.

Goethe and Schiller: yes, but Goethe has Schiller in tow. The association is not intrinsic, but accidental. Schiller is behind Goethe, not as one of two racers, runners, or regatta yachts; he is inferior in kind, as a ruby is to a diamond, or a garnet to a pearl. Schiller moulds, Goethe makes. Schiller composes, Goethe crystallizes. Goethe is a projectile like a planet, Schiller a spent ball, or rather like the swiftly spinning top that begins to waver on the floor. Goethe is one of a handful whom God and Nature hold for immortal fame; Schiller is among the thousand lesser luminaries. Goethe was self-luminous and conscious, like Cæsar or Bonaparte, of an end he was born for; Schiller was brilliant, adventurous, and con-

trived to carry his points. Goethe had the poise as well as brightness of the sun, Schiller shone more by reflected light. Goethe was a reporter or private secretary of the King, and without an intention utters no word. He is the granite, Schiller the secondary, yielding, friable trap-rock.

When Daniel Webster was urged to make a special effort, he said, "I will not strain myself to kill a fly; I reason not from worlds to atoms, but from atoms to worlds." The mark of greatness is ease, because then not the man, but the supreme power in him, is at work. The best work is unconscious, as the shell-fish carves and paints its house. It is the Divine Wisdom rather than energy that Goethe represents: so there is less grandeur of motion and of rising to the sublimer heights than in Shakespeare's Muse. He is, in the way of rushing strength, outstripped by Homer and Dante too. Yet his like their scripture bears being translated into every tongue. He sees, and helps us to see, more than he stirs and inspires. But his name seems chosen to announce his nature, and somewhat of the Deity is revealed when his instrument is handled and played. His eyes shed serene light over all. His works are an illustrated edition of the world.

Schiller is one of the great poets below the first rank. Put with Goethe, he is like some hill fair and noble by itself, but dwarfed by the neighboring height by which it is overtopped. As a singer, even by Heine he is surpassed. He is of a youthful quality, which

recommends him to young Germany and America more than to the old in either land; and I am content that youth should, if it please, put what it may consider as any detraction from him to the score of the prejudice of age. Schiller is ardent: with a tranquil fervor, Goethe is warm, but instructive above all. If I may use the figure, drawn perhaps from a grape-laden wain, "his paths drop fatness." His pithy sayings are not protruded with any conscious superiority, but fall without conceit and almost unawares by the way, in the large handling of his themes. Accused of egoism, as an author he is eminently free from that fault, which clings rather to writers of the oracular, transcendental, or radical school. The prophet or renewer of the time and the race must, however innocently, yet be loftily sensible of his momentary mission, as he towers an object of attack from the world he assails. But the dramatist, which such a man as Goethe is, alike in his verse and his prose, finds no room to scold or scream at what he portrays. He paints a Madonna, like Correggio, or a scene of dicers and drunkards, after the coarse style of some Dutch artist, with impartial concern. He leaves sinner and saint in the hand of that other Author who creates or permits both to exist.

V.

GOETHE'S MÄRCHEN.

BY FREDERIC H. HEDGE, D. D.

IN the summer of 1795, Goethe composed for Schiller's new magazine, "Die Horen," a prose poem known in German literature as "Das Märchen," *The Tale*; as if it were the only one, or the one which more than any other deserves that appellation.

It is not to be supposed that the author himself claimed this pre-eminence for his production. The definite article must be taken in connection with what precedes it in the "Unterhaltungen Deutscher Ausgewanderten"; it was *that* tale which the Abbé had promised for the evening's entertainment of the company.

Goethe gave this essay to the public as a riddle which would probably be unintelligible at the time, but which might perhaps find an interpreter after many days, when the hints contained in it should be verified. Since its first appearance commentators have exercised their ingenuity upon it, perceiving it to be allegorical, but until recently without success. They made the mistake of looking too far and too deep for the interpretation. Carlyle who, in 1832,

published a translation of it in "Fraser's Magazine," and who pronounces it "one of the notablest performances produced for the last thousand years," says, "So much however I will stake my whole money capital and literary character upon, that here is a wonderful EMBLEM OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY set forth," etc.

But Goethe was not the man to concern himself with such wide generalities. He preferred to deal with what is present and palpable, and the inferences to be deduced therefrom.

Dr. Hermann Baumgart, in 1875, under the title, "Goethe's Märchen, ein politisch-nationales Glaubens-bekenntniss des Dichter's," wrote a commentary on "The Tale," which gives what is probably the true explanation. If it does not solve every difficulty, it solves more difficulties and throws more light on the poem than any previous interpretation had done. I follow his lead in the exposition which I now offer.

"The Tale" is a prophetic vision of the destinies of Germany, an allegorical foreshowing at the close of the eighteenth century of what Germany was yet to become, and has in great part already become. A position is predicted for her like that which she occupied from the time of Charles the Great to the time of Charles V., a period during which the Holy Roman Empire of Germany was the leading secular power in Western Europe.

That time had gone by. From the middle of the sixteenth century until near the middle of the nineteenth, Germany declined, and at the date of this writing (1795) had nearly reached her darkest day. Disintegrated, torn by conflicting interests, pecked by petty rival princes, despairing of her own future, it seemed impossible that she should ever again become a power among the nations.

Goethe felt this, he felt it as profoundly as any German of his day. He has been accused of want of patriotism, and incurred much censure for that alleged defect. He certainly did not manifest his patriotism by loud declamation. During the War of Liberation he made no sign. Under the reign of the Holy Alliance he did not side with the hotheads, compeers of Sand, who placed themselves in open opposition to the government. He could not echo their cry. They were revolutionists, he was an evolutionist; and they hated him, they maligned him, they invented all manner of scandal against him. They accused him of abusing the affections of women for literary purposes. They even affected to depreciate his genius. Börne pronounced him a model of all that is bad. Menzel wrote: "Mark my words; in twenty, or, at the longest, thirty years, he will not have an admirer left; no one will read him." Well, near sixty years have elapsed, and here we are, on the other side of the globe, devoting these summer days to the reverent consideration of the man and his works.

But in the thirties and forties of this century those slanders had crossed the sea, and found ready acceptance on this side. There was nothing too bad to be said of Goethe; he was publicly held up for reprobation and scorn. It was as much as one's reputation was worth to speak well of him.

Goethe, I say, was charged with want of patriotism. He was no screamer; but he felt profoundly his country's woes, and he characteristically went into himself and studied the situation. The result was this wonderful composition, "*Das Märchen*."

He perceived that Germany must die to be born again. She did die, and is born again. He had the sagacity to foresee the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire, an event which took place eleven years later, in 1806. The Empire is figured by the composite statue of the fourth King in the subterranean Temple, which crumbles to pieces when that Temple, representing Germany's past, emerges and stands above ground by the River. The resurrection of the Temple and its stand by the River is the *dénouement* of the Tale. And that signifies, allegorically, the rehabilitation of Germany.

The agents that are to bring about this consummation are the spread of liberal ideas, signified by the gold of the Will-o'-wisps; Literature, signified by the Serpent; Science, signified by the Old Man with the Lamp; and the Church, or Religion, signified by his wife. The Genius of Germany is figured by the beautiful Youth, the disconsolate Prince, who dies of

devotion to the Fair Lily. The Lily herself represents the Ideal.

Having premised thus much, I now proceed to unfold the Tale, with accompanying comments, omitting, however, some of the details, and presenting only the organic moments of the fable.

In the middle of a dark night (the dark period of German history) the ferryman asleep in his hut by the side of a swollen river is awakened by the cry of parties demanding to be ferried across the stream.

Here let us pause a moment. The Hut, according to Baumgart, is the provisional State (Nothstaat), the government for the time being. The Ferryman then is the state functionary who regulates and controls civil intercourse. The River represents that intercourse, the flow of current events, swollen by the French Revolution. Now a river is separation and communication in one. The Rhine, which separates Germany from France, is also a medium of communication between the two. What is it, then, that the River in the Märchen separates and mediates? This is a difficult question. No interpretation tallies exactly with all the particulars of the allegory. The most satisfactory is that of a separation and a means of communication between State and people, between official, established tradition and popular life.

To return to the story. The Ferryman, roused from his slumbers, opens the door of the hut, and sees two Will-o'-wisps who are impatient to be put across.

These are the bearers of the new ideas which proved so stimulating to the German mind, giving rise to what is known in German literature as the *Aufklärung* (enlightenment). Why called Will-o'-wisps? They come from France, and the poet means by their flashes and vivacity, as contrasted with German gravity, to indicate their French origin.

They cause the Ferryman much trouble by their activity. They shake gold into his boat (that is, talk philosophy, the philosophy of the French Encyclopædists); he fears that some of it might fall into the stream, and then there would be mischief; the stream would rise in terrible waves and engulf him.

The new ideas were very radical, and, if allowed to circulate freely in social converse, might cause a revolution.

He bids them take back their gold. "We cannot take back what we have once given forth."

The word once spoken cannot be unspoken.

When they reach the opposite shore, he demands his fare. They reply that he who will not take gold for pay must go unpaid. He demands fruits of the earth (that is, practical service), which they despise. They attempt to depart, but find it impossible to move.

Philosophy without practical ability can make no headway in real life.

He finally releases them, on their promise to bring to the River three cabbages, three artichokes, and three onions.

I am not aware that there is any particular significance in the several kinds of vegetables here specified. The general meaning is, that whoever would work effectually in his time must satisfy the necessities of the time, must pay his toll to the State with contributions of practical utility.

The ferryman then rows down the stream, gathers up the gold that has fallen into the boat, goes ashore and buries it in an out of the way place in the cleft of a rock, then rows back to his hut.

Now in the rock cleft into which the gold had been cast dwelt the Green Serpent. The Serpent is supposed to represent German Literature, which until then had kept itself aloof from the world, had wandered as it were in a wilderness. But the time was now come when it was to receive new light and be quickened with new impulse.

She hears the chink of the falling gold pieces, darts upon them, and eagerly devours them. They melt in her interior, and she becomes self-luminous, — a thing that she had always been hoping for, but had never until then attained.

Proud of her new lustre she sallies forth to discover if possible whence the gold which came to her had been derived. She encounters the Will-o'-wisps, and claims relationship with them.

"Well, yes," they allow, "you are a kind of cousin, but you are in the horizontal line; we are vertical. See here." They shoot up to their utmost height. "Pardon us, good lady, but what other family can

boast of anything like that? No Will-o'-wisp ever sits or lies down." The Serpent is somewhat abashed by the comparison. She knows very well that although, when at rest, she can lift her head pretty high, she must bend to earth again to make any progress. She inquires if they can tell her where the gold came from which dropped in the cave where she resides. They are amused at the question, and immediately shake from themselves a shower of gold pieces, which she greedily devours. "Much good may it do you, madam."

In return for this service they desire to be shown the way to the abode of the Fair Lily, to whom they would pay their respects.

The Fair Lily represents Ideal Beauty.

The Serpent is sorry to inform them that the Lily dwells on the other side of the river. "On the other side!" they exclaim, "and we let ourselves be ferried across to this side, last night, in the storm! But perhaps the Ferryman may be still within call, and be willing to take us back." "No," she says, "he can bring passengers from the other side to this, but is not permitted to take any one back."

The interpretation here is doubtful. It may mean, that, while a jealous government is willing to assist in the deportation of questionable characters, it will have nothing to do with them on its own ground.

But besides the government ferry there are other means of getting across. The Serpent herself, by

making a bridge of her body, can take them across at high noon.

Literature in its supreme achievements, its meridian power, becomes a vehicle of ideas which defies political embargo.

But Will-o'-wisps do not travel at noonday. Another passage is possible at morning and evening twilight by means of the shadow of the Great Giant. The Giant's body is powerless, but its shadow is mighty, and, when the sun is low, stretches across the River.

Here all commentators seem to agree in one interpretation. Says Carlyle, "Can any mortal head, not a wigblock, doubt that the Giant of this poem is Superstition?" This is loosely expressed. Unquestionably superstition, in the way of fable or foreboding, stretches far into the unknown. But it is a *shadow* according to the Tale, which possesses this power. Now, to make a shadow two things are needed,—light, and a body which intercepts the light. The body in this case is popular ignorance; that is the real giant. Superstition is that giant's shadow, strongest and longest, of course, when the sun is low.

Thus instructed, the Will-o'-wisps take their leave, and the Serpent returns to her cave.

Now follows the scene in the subterranean Temple, the Temple of the Four Kings,—by which we are to understand historic Germany, the Germany of old time. The Serpent has discovered this temple, and,

having become luminous, is able to see what it contains. There are the statues of four kings. The first is of gold, the second of silver, the third of bronze, the fourth a compound of several metals. The first King, who wears a plain mantle and no ornament but a garland of oak leaves, represents the rule of Wisdom and acknowledged worth. The second, who sits and is highly decorated, — robe, crown, sceptre, adorned with precious stones, — represents the rule of Appearance (*Schein*), majesty supported by prestige and tradition. The third, also sitting, represents government by Force. The fourth, the composite figure in a standing posture, represents the Holy Roman Empire of Germany. The Serpent has been discoursing with the Gold King, when the wall opens and enters an old man of middle stature in peasant's dress, carrying a lamp with a still flame pleasing to look upon, which illumines the whole temple without casting any shadow. This lamp possesses the strange property of changing stones into gold, wood into silver, dead animals into precious stones, and of annihilating metals. But to exercise this power it must shine alone; if another light appears beside it, it only diffuses a clear radiance, by which all living things are refreshed.

The bearer of this lamp is supposed by Baumgart to represent Science (*Wissenschaft*), but it seems to me that his function includes practical wisdom as well. What is signified by the marvellous properties of the lamp must be left to each reader to conjecture.

"Why do you come," asks the Gold King of the Man with the lamp, "seeing we already have light?" "You know that I cannot enlighten what is wholly dark," is the reply.

Wisdom does not concern itself with what is unsearchable, with matters transcending human ken.

"Will my kingdom end?" asks the Silver King. "Late or never." The Brazen King asks, "When shall I arise?" The answer is, "Soon." "With whom shall I combine?" "With your elder brothers." "What will the youngest do?" inquired the King. "He will sit down," replied the Man with the lamp. "I am not tired," growled the fourth King.

The Empire, even at that date, was still tenacious of its sway.

Again the Gold King asks of the Man with the lamp, "How many secrets knowest thou?" "Three," replied the man. "Which is the most important?" asks the Silver King. "The open secret," the man replies.

It sometimes happens that a truth, or conviction, is, as we say, "in the air," before the word which formulates it has been spoken; it is an open secret. Thus, in the closing months of 1860, "Secession" was in the air; it was our open secret.

"Wilt thou open it to us also?" asks the Brazen King. "When I know the fourth," replied the Man. "I know the fourth," said the Serpent, and whispered something in the ear of the Man with the lamp. He cried with a loud voice, "The time is at hand." The temple resounded, the statues rang with the cry; and

immediately the Man with the lamp vanished to the west, the Serpent to the east.

Here ends the first act of this prophetic drama. The Man with the lamp returns to his cottage, where the Old Woman, his wife, greets him with loud lamentations. "Scarcely were you gone," she whimpers, "when two impetuous travellers called ; they were dressed in flames, and seemed quite respectable. One might have taken them for Will-o'-wisps. But they soon began to flatter me and made impertinent advances." "Pooh! they were only chaffing you. Considering your age, my dear, they could n't have meant anything serious." "My age indeed! always my age! How old am I then? But I know one thing. Just look at these walls! See the bare stones! They have licked off all the gold; and when they had done it, they dropped gold pieces about. Our dear pug swallowed some of them, and see there, the poor creature lies dead."

The Old Woman represents the Church, the accepted, traditional religion. There is a beautiful fitness in this symbolism. Science and religion, knowledge and faith, are mutually complementary in human life. The little pug may mean some pet dogma of the Church; Baumgart suggests belief in the supernatural, to which modern enlightenment (the gold of the Will-o'-wisps) proves fatal. The little pug dies; but a doctrine which perishes, which becomes obsolete as popular belief, may become historically precious as myth.

This is what is meant when it is said, farther on, that the old man with his lamp changes the pug to an onyx. Moreover, when such myth is embraced by poetry, it acquires a new, transfigured, immortal life. Thus the gods of Greece still live, and live forever, in Homer's song. In this sense, with this aim, the Man with the lamp sends the onyx pug to the Fair Lily, whose touch causes dead things to live.

The Old Woman had incautiously promised the Will-o'-wisps — in order, we may suppose, to get rid of them — to pay their debt to the River, of three cabbages, three artichokes, and three onions.

But why did they visit her cottage at all, and why so intent on the obsolete gold on its walls? The answer is, modern culture knows full well that the Church is the depositary of many precious truths, which, though no longer current in the form in which they were once clothed, approve and justify themselves when restated and given to the world in a new form. So they, the New Lights, say in effect to the Church, "Old Lady, you are somewhat out of date; if you mean to keep your place and vindicate your right to be, you must throw yourself into the life of the time, you must contribute something useful to forward that life. It is through you that the new philosophy must discharge its debt to the River" (that is, to the life of the time).

The Man with the lamp approves and seconds the commission intrusted to his wife by the Will-o'-wisps, and at dawn of day loads her with the cabbages, the

artichokes, and the onions destined for the River, to which he adds the onyx as a present to the Fair Lily. The first part of her mission is a failure. On her way to the ferry she encounters the Shadow of the blundering Giant stretching across the plain. The Shadow unceremoniously puts its black fingers into her basket, takes out three vegetables, one of each kind, and thrusts them into the mouth of the Giant, who greedily devours them.

Some freak of popular ignorance intercepts and impairs the practical benefit which the new culture, through the Church, had hoped to confer on the age.

The Ferryman refuses to accept the imperfect offering as full satisfaction of the Will-o'-wisps' debt, and only consents at last to receive it provisionally, if the Old Woman will swear to make the number good within twenty-four hours. She is required to dip her hand in the stream and take the oath. She dips and swears. But when she withdraws her hand, behold! it has turned black; and, what is worse, has grown smaller, and seems likely to disappear altogether.

The apparent dignity of the Church is impaired by contact with vulgar life.

"O woe!" she cries. "My beautiful hand, which I have taken so much pains with and have always kept so nice! What will become of me?" The Ferryman tries to comfort her with the assurance that, although the hand might become invisible, she would be able to use it all the same. "But," says

she, "I would rather not be able to use it than not have it seen."

Here is a stroke of satire on the part of the poet, implying that the Church cares more for the show of authority than for the substance.

Sad and sullen the Old Woman takes up her basket and bends her steps toward the abode of the Fair Lily. On the way she overtakes a pilgrim more disconsolate than herself; a beautiful youth, with noble features, abundant brown locks, his breast covered with glittering mail, a purple cloak depending from his shoulders. His naked feet paced the hot sand; profound grief appeared to render him insensible to external impressions. The Old Woman endeavors to open a conversation with him, but receives no encouragement. She desists with the apology, "You walk too slow for me, sir. I must hurry on, for I have to cross the River on the Green Serpent, that I may take this present from my husband to the Fair Lily." "You are going to the Fair Lily," he cried; "then our roads are the same. But what is this present you are bringing her?" She showed him the onyx pug. "Happy beast!" he exclaimed; "thou wilt be touched by her hands, thou wilt be made alive by her; whereas the living are forced to stand aloof from her lest they experience a mournful doom. Look at me," he continued, "how sad my condition! This mail which I have worn with honor in war, this purple which I have sought to merit by wise conduct, are all that is left me by

fate,—the one a useless burden, the other an unmeaning decoration. Crown, sceptre, and sword are gone ; I am in all other respects as naked and needy as any son of earth. So unblest is the influence of her beautiful blue eyes ; they deprive all living beings of their strength, and those who are not killed by the touch of her hand find themselves turned into walking shadows.”

This is finely conceived. The Youth, the Prince who has lost sceptre and sword, represents the Genius of Germany, once so stalwart and capable in action, now (at the time of Goethe’s writing) enervated and become a melancholy dreamer from excessive devotion to the Lily, that is, excessive Idealism ; whereby

“Enterprises of great pith and moment
 their currents turn awry,
 And lose the name of action.”

Such was Germany in those days. And even later, Freiligrath compared her to Hamlet, in whom

“The native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought.”

The travellers cross the bridge which the Serpent makes for them. The Serpent herself straightens out her bow and accompanies them. On the way the Will-o’-wisps, invisible in broad day, are heard whispering a request to the Serpent that she would introduce them to the Lily in the evening, as soon as they should be any way presentable. The Lily

receives her visitors graciously, but with an air of deep dejection. She imparts to the Old Woman her recent affliction. While her pet Canary-bird was warbling its morning hymn, a Hawk appeared in the air and threatened to pounce upon it. The frightened creature sought refuge in its mistress's bosom, and, like all living things, was killed by her touch.

The Hawk represents the newly awakened, impatient spirit of German Patriotism, which scared into silence the lighter lyrics of the time.

The Old Woman presents the onyx pug, and the Lily is delighted with the gift. Her touch gives it life. She plays with it, caresses it. The melancholy youth who stands by and looks on is maddened with jealousy at the sight. "Must a nasty little beast be so fondled, and receive her kiss on its black snout, while I, her adorer, am kept at a distance?" At last he can bear it no longer, and resolves to perish in her arms. He rushes towards her; she, knowing the consequence, instinctively puts out her arms to ward him off, and thereby hastens the catastrophe. The youth falls lifeless at her feet.

Here ends the second act. The Genius of Germany is apparently extinct. Can it be revived? The third and final act foreshows its revival, — the political rehabilitation of Germany. I am compelled by want of time to omit, in what follows, many of the accessories, such as the female attendants of the Lily, the mirror, the last desperate freaks of the

Giant, etc., and to keep myself to the main thread of the story.

The first object now, on the part of those interested, is to prevent corruption, which would make resuscitation impossible. So the Serpent forms with her body a cordon around the lifeless form of the Youth to protect it. "Who will fetch the Man with the lamp?" she cries, fearing every moment that the sun will set and dissolution penetrate the magic circle, causing the body of the Youth to fall in pieces. At length she espies the Hawk in the air, and hails the auspicious omen.

Patriotism still lives.

Shortly after, the Man with the lamp appears. "Whether I can help," he says, "I know not. The individual by himself cannot do much, but only he who, at the proper moment, combines with many."

All who have their country's salvation at heart must join their forces in time of need.

Night comes on. The Old Man glances at the stars and says, "We are here at the propitious hour; let each do his duty and perform his part." The Serpent then began to stir; she loosened her enfolding circle, and slid in large volumes toward the River. The Will-o'-wisps followed. The Old Man and his Wife seized the basket, lifted into it the body of the Youth, and laid the Canary-bird upon his breast. The basket rose of itself into the air, and hovered over the Old Woman's head. She followed the Will-o'-wisps. The Fair Lily with the pug in her arms followed the Wo-

man, and the Man with the lamp closed the procession. The Serpent bridged the River for them, and then drew her circle again around the basket containing the body of the Youth. The Old Man stoops down to her and asks, "What are you going to do?" "Sacrifice myself," she answers, "rather than be sacrificed." The Man bids the Lily touch the Serpent with one hand and the body of the Youth with the other. She does so, and behold! the Youth comes to life again, but not to full consciousness. Then the Serpent bursts asunder. Her form breaks into thousands upon thousands of glittering jewels. These the Man with the lamp gathers up and casts into the stream, where they afterward form a solid and permanent bridge. The Old Man now leads the party to the cave. They stand before the Temple barred with golden lock and bolt. The Will-o'-wisps at the bidding of the Old Man melt bolt and lock with their flames, and the company are in the presence of the four Kings. "Whence come ye?" asks the Gold King. "From the world," is the reply. "Whither go ye?" asked the Silver King. "Into the world." "What would ye with us?" asked the Brazen King. "Accompany you," said the Old Man. "Who will govern the world?" asked the Composite King. "He who stands on his feet," is the answer. "That am I," said the King. "We shall see," said the Old Man, "for the time is come."

Then the ground beneath them began to tremble; the Temple was in motion. For a few moments a fine

shower seemed to drizzle from above. "We are now beneath the River," said the Old Man. The Temple mounts upward. Suddenly a crash is heard; planks and beams come through the opening of the dome. It is the old Ferryman's hut, which the Temple in its ascent had detached from the ground. It descends and covers the Old Man and the Youth. The women, who find themselves excluded, beat against the door of the hut, which is locked. After a while the door and walls begin to ring with a metallic sound. The flame of the Old Man's lamp has converted the wood into silver. The very form has changed; the hut has become a smaller temple, or, if you will, a shrine, within the larger.

Observe the significance of this feature of the Tale. The hut, as was said, represents the existing government. New Germany is not to be the outcome of a violent revolution forcibly abolishing the old, but a natural growth receiving the old into itself, assimilating and embodying it in a new constitution.

When the Youth came forth from the transformed hut, it was in company with a man clad in a white robe, bearing a silver oar in his hand. This was the old Ferryman, now to become a functionary in the new State.

As soon as the rising sun illumined the cupola of the Temple, the Old Man, standing between the Youth and the Maiden (the Lily), said with a loud voice, "There are three that reign on earth, Wisdom, Show, Force." When the first was named, up rose the Gold

King ; with the second, the Silver. The Brazen King was rising slowly at the sound of the third, when the Composite King (the Holy Roman Empire) suddenly collapsed into a shapeless heap. The Man with the lamp now led the still half-conscious Youth to the Brazen King, at whose feet lay a sword. The Youth girded himself with it. "The sword on the left," said the mighty King, "the right hand free." They then went to the Silver King, who gave the Youth his sceptre, saying, "Feed the sheep." They came to the Gold King, who, with a look that conveyed a paternal blessing, crowned the Youth's head with a garland of oak leaves, and said, "Acknowledge the Highest."

The Youth now awoke to full consciousness ; his eyes shone with an unutterable spirit, and his first word was, "Lily." He clasped the fair maiden, whose cheeks glowed with an inextinguishable red, and, turning to the Old Man, said, with a glance at the three sacred figures, "Glorious and safe is the kingdom of our fathers ; but you forgot the fourth power, that which earliest, most universal, and surest of all, rules the world, — the power of Love." "Love," said the Old Man, smiling, "does not rule, but educates. And that is better."

And so the Temple stands by the River. The Old Woman, having at the bidding of her husband bathed in its waves, comes forth rejuvenated and beautified. The Old Man himself looks younger.

Husband and wife, Science and Religion, renew

their nuptial vows, and pledge their troth for indefinite time.

The prophecy is accomplished. What Genius predicted ninety years ago has become fact. The Temple stands by the River, the bridge is firm and wide. The Genius of Germany is no longer a sighing, sickly youth, pining after the unattainable, but, having married his ideal, is now embodied in the mighty Chancellor whose state-craft founded the new Empire, and whose word is a power among the nations.

VI.

GOETHE'S RELATION TO ENGLISH
LITERATURE.

By F. B. SANBORN.

IN that triangulation and speculative mensuration of the greatest German intellect which we have this year attempted, I have been assigned to a single field, "Goethe's Relation to English Literature." If this were understood to mean the influence upon Goethe's own work of the antecedent literature of England, one could almost treat this theme as the old writer did when describing Iceland. One of his chapters contained this and nothing more: "Chapter VI. *Concerning Serpents in Iceland*. There are no serpents in Iceland."

When Handel, the great German musician, went to Ireland about 1722, he carried a letter of introduction from some of his English Tory friends to Dean Swift, then living near Dublin. As soon as the Dean heard he was a German musician, he declined to see Handel; but when his servant added that the bearer of the letter was "a great genius," Swift cried out, "What! a genius and a German! show him up

this instant." Such was the reputation which the intellectual character of the Germans inspired in Great Britain thirty years before Goethe was born; and such it continued through much of the lifetime of Frederic the Great, who made Germany so respectable in matters of war and state-craft. That singular and useful tyrant, whose life Carlyle has so brilliantly related, had the greatest contempt for his country's literature, which he would not read, and for its clumsy language, which he did not know how to spell. He had contracted this prejudice in his youth, before Goethe was born, and he continued in it after Goethe, who even more than Handel was "a German and a genius," had begun to publish his youthful works. Goethe was born at Frankfort, outside of Frederic's dominions, in 1749; he published his first important work, the play of "Götz von Berlichingen," in 1773, and about this time Frederic wrote an "Essay on German Literature,"¹ in which he said:—

"To convince yourself of the little taste which prevails in Germany, you need only go to our theatres; there you will see the abominable works of Shakespeare exhibited, in German translations, while the whole audience almost die with delight, as they listen to ridiculous farces, worthy of American barbarians. Shakespeare perhaps may be pardoned his caprices, because the birth of an art is never its point of perfection; but here we have a 'Götz

¹ This Essay was communicated by Frederic to D'Alembert in January, 1781.

von Berlichingen' making his appearance, — a detestable imitation of these wretched English productions. The pit applauds, and enthusiastically demands a repetition of such disgusting dulness."

Even in 1777, when "The Woes of Young Werther" had captivated Europe, and "Faust" and "Iphigenia" were begun by Goethe, who was then twenty-eight years old, and at the height of his poetic creativeness, neither Frederic nor the old Voltaire, who constantly wrote letters complimenting each other, valued this rising star in the least degree. Frederic wrote to Voltaire, December 17, 1777: "As to works of the imagination, I am convinced that we must get along with Homer, Virgil, Tasso, Voltaire, and Ariosto; for the human mind seems to be withering in all countries, and no longer produces either fruit or flowers." Of these poets thus named the Prussian King preferred Voltaire, to whom he had written two years before: "You are the rival of Ariosto. We do not know much about Homer's life, but Virgil was nothing more than a poet. Racine did not write prose well, and Milton was but the slave of his country's tyrant. You alone have united talents so various."

Yet the great Frederic, with all this blindness to the genius that was before his aged eyes, did finally predict the triumph of German literature, which Goethe and Schiller were to create. In one of his papers, which first saw the light after his death, in 1786, appear these prophetic words:—

"We shall have our classic authors; our neighbors will study German, and it will be spoken in the courts of princes. Our language, polished and improved, may haply, in the books of great writers, extend over all Europe. These summer days of German literature approach. I foretell them, but shall not see them. Age deprives me of this hope; like Moses, I have a view of the promised land, but may not enter it."

Frederic was, of course, as ignorant of Schiller's genius as of Goethe's. In 1781, the year that Schiller brought out his popular play, "The Robbers," which still keeps the stage after a hundred years, the old King sent to D'Alembert, in Paris, his "Essay on German Literature," already cited, and in his accompanying letter said: "Our language does not deserve to be studied till good authors have first rendered it famous; and of these we are entirely destitute. They will perhaps appear when I am walking in the Elysian fields, where I intend to offer to Virgil the idyls of a German named Gesner, and the fables of Gellert."

But to return. Goethe, unlike Schiller, but in this like Milton, whom he did not much read, drew more from the Greek fountain than from Shakespeare's "well of English undefiled"; and his "Iphigenia," like Milton's "Samson," follows closely in the steps of Greek tragedy, while his "Faust" in no way resembles the "Dr. Faustus" of Marlowe, who was Shakespeare's only brother in English tragedy, but has a rich Gothic exuberance of its own in the first part,

and a broad philosophic conspectus, broken by strains of lyric melody, in its long-delayed and confusing conclusion. In fact, the form of Goethe's "Faust" is no less original, I might say individual, than his conception of Satan, who, as Mephistopheles, sets at defiance every preconceived type of the Evil One.

Doubtless there has been no such poetical genius since Shakespeare as this German dramatist and poet, who is also novelist, art critic, man of science, and philosopher. But his versatility, and the whole strain of his genius, are not in the English manner, nor bred in any English school. That inward vision of thought and nature, — that profound conception of the world's symbolism, — which is so wonderful in Shakespeare, and in other English poets exists in a less degree, is coupled in Goethe's case with a plodding, patient, almost pedantic research into the laws and methods, and even the smallest details, of nature and of thought. Having flown to his height of imagination on the wings of poesy, Goethe must needs build a stairway therefrom downward to the merest, most beggarly elements; so that he and others shall go up and down as they please, counting every step of the way. Moreover, while Shakespeare and other great poets content themselves with setting forth the ideal, — flashing it out perhaps for a single moment upon our mind's eye, — Goethe insists on realizing his ideal in every form and institution of society. In this respect he resembles Plato more than any of the moderns; yet he does not resemble Bacon, that English

truncated Plato, except in some of those superficial points of similarity which do not touch the real character of the two men. Goethe, like Bacon, "took all knowledge to be his province"; like Bacon, he delighted in state and splendor, in the completion of his theory until it should fill out and touch at every point the circumference of man's world; but then in that poet's eye which, with fine frenzy,

"Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,"

Goethe excelled the English Chancellor even more than he did in that terrestrial prudence or fortune which so handsomely convoyed him through life, while Bacon fell into disgrace and belittled himself by complaints and entreaties. Indeed, the good fortune of Goethe was something almost appalling, and must have often made him think of Polycrates and his ring; it went beyond the felicity of Shakespeare's life, which consisted partly in his obscurity; while Goethe was at once conspicuous and safe, — admired, and not ruined by admiration. Goethe suffered spiritually from this good fortune, and I must say that, when compared with the best English and American authors, the finest aroma of our literature — which proceeds from a magnanimous and adventurous character, displayed now in love, now in war, now in the heroism of private life or in the sanctities of religion — is perpetually wanting in Goethe. I do not speak now of Shakespeare, in whom this magnanimity had its widest and highest range, but of lesser poets and prose

writers, who sometimes in very humble spheres of literature display the same winning quality. It is this which gives immortality to Sidney's youthful essays in verse and prose, —which makes Herbert memorable, Marvell more than a wit, and poor Dryden respectable even in his degradations; this gleams in Donne and Jeremy Taylor, in Gray and Dr. Johnson; in Wordsworth, Shelley, and Byron; in Burns and Carlyle among the Scotch, and among Americans in Thoreau and Emerson, in Walt Whitman, and others of less note. It is by virtue of an untamable energy that English literature is capable of rising so high, and sinking so low, and is incapable of that measured and deliberate excellence of which the books of Plato and of Goethe are perhaps the best examples. ✓

In the writings of Goethe, not less than in his life, we see the limitations which egoism imposes, and which not his great genius even could remove. "A man," said Cromwell to the French Ambassador, "never rises so high as when he knows not whither he is going." ✓ Although Goethe would fain follow his intuitions, and yield himself to the impulse of the moment, his very intuitions had prudence and self-love in them, so firmly implanted that he could never escape from worldly considerations. But the old belief of mankind is wisest, which declares that the poet's inspiration is greater than any worldly prudence, and that the oracles are sincere.

Goethe's relation to German literature was something different from Shakespeare's relation to our own, of which he is the head and front, but which he did not create, nor did he sustain it in his own time. Without Shakespeare there would still have been an important and universal English literature, though it would be far less significant and poetic than it is. Without Goethe, not only would the literature of his fatherland be less poetic and less significant, but it would not have extended so swiftly over Europe, and led to that rapid extension of German philosophy, and German science also, which our century, now closing, has seen and profited by. Goethe lived to be nearly as old as Voltaire, dying in 1832, at the age of eighty-two; and his period of authorship covered more than sixty of those years. His greatest work, "Faust," was only completed in its present form a short time before his death; his next greatest book, "Wilhelm Meister," was in fact left unfinished, although he had been at work on it for thirty years. Besides these books, which are everywhere known, he published more than forty other volumes; while his letters and conversations, printed since his death, and his manuscripts at Weimar, soon to be published, will make twenty or thirty volumes more. Hardly any author, even in Germany, has written so much; and no German author — not even Luther, whose books are the foundation of German prose literature — is now so indispensable to those who would know what Ger-

many has thought, or what modern culture is and has been for a hundred years past. He is the greatest poet, though not the best dramatist, of Germany ; and he is one of the few great prose-writers in a language that does not readily lend itself, as the French does, to graceful prose, or, as the English does, to vigorous and picturesque prose.

When Goethe began to study and to write,—and it is hard to say which came first with him,—the literatures that lay before him as models were the Greek, the Latin, the French, the Italian, and the English ; in later years, he tasted something of the Oriental thought and literature. Of all these we should hold that English literature was the greatest, when Shakespeare is taken into account, — as he was, and very fully, by Goethe, — yet the Greek, the Latin, and especially the French, exercised apparently a more potent sway over the young poet's mind, and were better known to him. For it is difficult to find in Goethe's fifty volumes any serious traces of English influence from the literary side, although he read and admired Shakespeare and Marlowe, knew something of Bacon, Newton, and Milton, praised Goldsmith, and extended a respectful patronage towards Byron. But it is impossible to say that English literature impressed him and moulded his own work as did the classical literature, the Oriental, or even the French and Italian. In this respect, as in so many others, he presents a contrast to Schiller, who was deeply influenced in his dramatic forms of expression by Shakespeare, as he

was by Kant in his philosophic theories and rules of criticism.¹

If ever men are self-forgetful, it is when they are in love, — at least for a brief period of that passion, — and it is the magnanimity thence proceeding which gives worth and dignity to characters otherwise frivolous or brutal, like those of Antony and Cleopatra, who, like Othello, “loved not wisely but too well.” Goethe, as Dr. Bartol has said, loved not well enough, but too wisely; he lacked that magnanimity which men and women much less gifted have displayed in their affection, though himself magnanimous in the other relations of life. And I must accuse him of another great fault, which he never learned of the English poets; he would “kiss and tell.” Shakespeare has so well disguised his affairs of the heart, that it will always remain a question, not only whom he loved, but whether it was love or friendship of which he wrote so wonderfully; but Goethe has related what he should not about Gretchen, and

¹ It should be remembered that Kant, the greatest of all the German philosophical writers, was an older contemporary of Schiller and of Goethe, having been born at Königsberg in 1724, a quarter-century before Goethe, and dying there in 1804, the year before Schiller's premature death. There was another person of the same name at Königsberg earlier, whom Frederick the Great praised (in 1739) for his eloquence, and his graceful use of the awkward German language, saying: “I confess I never heard better German, more beautiful phrases, nor a style more flowing and embellished. M. Kant is, past dispute, the first man in the kingdom for uttering nonsense with dignity.” See Frederic's letter to Jordan, August 3, 1739.

Annette, and Emilia, and Lucinda, and Frederica, and Heaven knows how many more. To be sure, he has given them an immortality thereby, and by idealizing them in his plays, and novels, and poems ; but even there we feel that he has taken an unfair advantage of these fair ones, by drawing their pictures for the world to see, when they were turning their faces toward him alone. Whether these love affairs were innocent or not, — and I am disposed to give them always the most favorable construction, — there is here a betrayal of confidence, against which one of the minor English poets of Shakespeare's time had warned him. Donne says : —

“ If, as I have, you also do
Virtue in woman see,
And dare love that, and say so too,
And forget the He and She, —

“ And if this love, though placéd so,
From profane men you hide,
Who will no faith on this bestow,
Or, if they do, deride, —

“ Then you have done a braver thing
Than all the Worthies did,
And a braver thence will spring,
Which is, to keep that hid.”

Goethe was born of a wealthy burgher family in Frankfort, ten years before Schiller ; and they both grew to manhood at a time when England, through Pitt and his son, had much to say and do in the

affairs of Germany. Yet the connection of the two countries in literary matters was of the slightest.

“Pathless the gulf of feeling yawns,” —

and the great abyss that is fixed between the sentiments and daily opinions of Germany and England was quite as wide when England had a German king as it is to-day. France was nearer spiritually, as well as geographically, and we find the young Goethe far more affected by French than by English books. He read Shakespeare early, and felt his vast powers; he also read Richardson and Goldsmith, and found pleasure, perhaps inspiration, in “The Vicar of Wakefield”; but the daily influence of French thought and the French style did more to modify the strong native impulses of Goethe than any impressions that came to him from England. No sooner did he begin to become known in England however, than he exerted an influence of his own on English literature, which has been growing stronger ever since, and has had some remarkable results, — chiefly by indirect radiation through Carlyle, Emerson, Matthew Arnold, and a host of lesser writers or translators. The first and most eminent of his translators, until Carlyle appeared, was Walter Scott, who, in 1799, published in Edinburgh a version of “Götz von Berlichingen,” which Goethe himself had published twenty-six years before. In itself this play is of little value, as compared with the later works of Goethe; but it has a peculiar significance, as the first of those

feudal romances which, forty years afterwards, in the hands of Scott, became such an important part of European literature.

The real work of Goethe, indeed, was not to vary the existing forms of literature, however much he might do this, but to inspire in all literature a deep conviction of the unity of Nature and the absolute activity of spirit. This, once done, is nothing less than regeneration of the inner life of literature, which may thenceforth take any form, old or new, and yet be true to the inworking spirit. Carlyle seems to have been the first of British writers to seize this perception of Goethe's mission, and he was certainly the first to enforce and insist upon it in ways that soon wrought an actual, if incipient, revival in the English-speaking world of letters. With him was soon associated our own Emerson, who, arriving at the same insight, not through Goethe's illumination, but by his own, nevertheless found his inward light extended and clarified by the writings of both Goethe and Carlyle. The period of Goethe's death (March, 1832) may be taken as the time when Carlyle and Emerson distinctly perceived that they stood at the opening of a new era; and it was not long afterwards, when they met at Craigenputtock, that they also became aware of the unity existing between them upon vital issues, and that they were appointed to carry forward Goethe's work in their own lands, and with reinforcement of each other. What Carlyle thought at Goethe's death he has left on record,

and we may be sure that in essentials Emerson would have said the same things. Carlyle wrote in "The New Monthly Magazine" for 1832:—

"So then our Greatest has departed. That melody of life, with its cunning tones, which took captive ear and heart, has gone silent: the heavenly force that dwelt here, victorious over so much, is here no longer; thus far, not farther, shall the wise man, by speech and by act, utter himself forth. . . . Goethe, it is commonly said, made a new era in literature; a Poetic Era began with him, the end or ulterior tendencies of which are yet nowise generally visible. This common saying is a true one; and true with a far deeper meaning than, to the most, it conveys. . . . It begins now to be everywhere surmised that the real force, which in this world all things must obey, is Insight, Spiritual Vision and Determination. The Thought is parent of the Deed, nay, is living soul of it, and last and continual, as well as first mover of it; is the foundation, beginning, and essence, therefore, of Man's whole existence here below. The true sovereign of the world, who moulds the world, like soft wax, according to his pleasure, is he who lovingly *sees* into the world; the inspired thinker, whom in these days we name Poet. The true sovereign is the Wise Man."

Some years later, Emerson added his testimony as follows:—

"The Greeks said, Alexander went as far as Chaos; Goethe went, only the other day, as far; and one step farther he hazarded and brought himself back. He has clothed our modern existence with poetry. Amid little-

ness and detail, he detected the genius of life, the old cunning Proteus, nestling close beside us, and showed that the dulness and prose we ascribe to the age was only another of his masks.

‘His very flight is presence in disguise.’

Goethe, the head and body of the German nation, does not speak from talent, but the truth shines through; he is very wise, though his talent often veils his wisdom. However excellent his sentence is, he has somewhat better in view. The old Eternal Genius who built the world has confided himself more to this man than to any other.”

Emerson is not always to be construed literally, any more than other poets are, — and he did not mean to say that Goethe was nearer to the old Eternal Genius than Shakespeare had been. His portrait of these two men, side by side, was given to the world later, (in 1867,) in those remarkable verses called “Solution,” in which he guesses the riddle of the Muse who asks, —

“Have you eyes to find the five
Which five hundred did survive?”

Yes, says Emerson, the five great writers are Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Swedenborg, and Goethe; and thus he portrays the English and the German poet: —

“Seethed in mists of Penmanmaur,
Taught by Plinlimmon’s Druid power,
England’s genius filled all measure
Of heart and soul, of strength and pleasure,
Gave to the mind its emperor,
And life was larger than before;

Nor sequent centuries could hit
Orbit and sum of Shakespeare's wit.
The men who lived with him became
Poets, for the air was fame.

“In newer days of war and trade,
Romance forgot and faith decayed,
When Science armed and guided war,
And clerks the Janus-gates unbar, —
When France, where poet never grew,
Halved and dealt the globe anew, —
GOETHE, raised o'er joy and strife,
Drew the firm lines of Fate and Life,
And brought Olympian wisdom down
To court and mart, to gown and town ;
Stooping, his finger wrote in clay
The open secret of to-day.”

Among the friends of Emerson, while he was studying Goethe, none was more intimate than Mr. Alcott, whose diaries preserve much that was common to the thought of the two friends. I will therefore read from the diaries of 1847 and later years some of his comments on Goethe as he read him from time to time. Mr. Alcott writes (date uncertain): —

“Life is but a Werther's Sorrows to many, with an end as tragical ; nor can it be otherwise till we come forth from our woes to speak peace to the wailers. The chaos about us is but the confusion within us ; first place ourself, and all things then take place around us. Hitherto, for the most part, men have been bad economists of life, and spendthrifts of themselves. Few have deserved the epithet ‘illustrious,’ —and yet life itself

might be a lustre so dazzling that to have hidden its flame were almost to quench it."

(1847.) "Goethe has treated the strife of the worst for the best, in nature, more cunningly than either of his predecessors, Moses or the author of the Uzzian Job. And for this old-world fable he was better fitted than any one of his time. He has an eye for subtleties. He is a discerner of spirits, a draughtsman of guile. His faith in nature was so entire that it held all fine gifts at his service, nor could he, fortified and equipped as was his genius, but render faithful copies of what he so clearly saw and learned to portray. 'The demons sat to him,' and we have before us the world he knew so well, and also the one in which almost all are conversant. For this demon of the temptation is as old as man, and thus far the catastrophe has been disastrous to individuals in conflict with multitudes. None has come off victorious with his life; the world-spirit, Mephistopheles, bribing even the Faust, or the will, proffering the present delights for the future pains as at first."

(1851.) "Dipped here and there into 'Faust' (Anna Swanwick's translation), and am admitted more intimately than by Hayward's or Anster's version into the subtleties of the modern Satan, the world-spirit of the nineteenth century. Our devil has partaken of the cosmopolitan ✓ culture; he, too, is a scholar and a gentleman, scarcely distinguishable in a crowd from any mortal else, — his complexion sallow by a shade, perhaps, and, if surveyed closely, some show of hoofs in his boots. . . . Faust's dealings with him are infinitely suggestive and profitable, and inclusive of the whole range of guile. 'The demon

sat gladly,' — the portrait is sketched by a master, and is exhaustive of the subject. Goethe knew too much to paint well anything else ; and this, his masterpiece, remains as the last likeness, finished up to the latest dates. Yet he lived too early to sketch this Western democratic shape, some fifty or more years later. Apropos of him, just now and here in this Western hemisphere everybody is putting down the dark Webster as the latest and best devil, concrete and astir in space perhaps, — certainly in these American parts, — clearly responsible for the sins of cities, North and South, — a Satan of national type and symmetry. 'T is a great pity that Goethe should have come too soon. Head, shoulders, all, all of Webster should have gone into the picture, and this legal, logical, constitutional Mephistopheles of the States had justice done him by his master. . . . Perhaps Goethe is the most remarkable instance in literature of an intellect holding its eye quite coincident with the plane of things, — endowed likewise with an aptitude to seize at the nick of time every aspect of the demonic forces, as these emerged from their hidings in Nature. But he was held, by consequence, to the mundane plane and the fatal moment, — an intellectual describer, but never a partaker at heart of what he saw and sketched so inimitably. His aloofness from life and from the spirit of permanence ; his inability to identify himself with the heart and whole of things, the soul of souls ; the duplicity of his genius, one may say, left him the sport of a cunning which partook, at once, of the fate that drives, and of the freedom that controls life's motions. We feel that this eye, mighty as it is and miraculous, escapes not the spell that holds it fixedly on the features he is portraying. There is never

the elevation of lid and fluency of light, telling of raptures and of the world's saints, seen and felt, — the sure sign of victories won from nature and one's self. Goethe was cunning, but he was never wisely wise. Too noble for mere prudence, he was coeval with fate; but never magnanimous and Fate's victor; and as the Fates made, so they slew him too, but by incantations soft, siren-like, and prolonged, melodizing his muse, and intimating (almost persuading us the while) his claim to a perpetuity of genius which was not theirs to give. All he was his Faust has taken and celebrates. Faust is admitted to heaven as Goethe to mortality, without the fee of a divinity which alone opens honestly the gates. So the clandestine wins by defeats, from the beginning of evil till its ending here."

(1851.) "There is adequate justification for Goethe's treatment of Evil in his great poem, about which so much has been said and written, — most of this quite wide of its drift and province. It is one of the auspicious signs of these latter times that men are beginning to canvass and account for everything that turns up in the world. Nothing remains unquestioned; the popular inquiry is, 'Who are you? what are you here for? Account for your existence, — show us, on penalty of forfeiting it, what right you have to be, — and away with you, if you cannot do it!' Even the Devil, his place and functions in the world, are under discussion, and he too will have to show what he is here for, or quit forthwith. That is a question altogether new, first raised on its proper grounds and poetically argued by Goethe in the 'Faust.' But now the thinkers everywhere are fast hold of it; and it

must render up its secret, so long hidden from the faith of men. Modern judgments seem to be far more tolerant of the Devil than at any former period of the world ; his claims are fairly admitted, and his right to be here and take part in mundane affairs is unquestionable. Tolerance is taking place of the old prejudices, and it is becoming quite evident that his presence is indispensable. The most enlightened minds go still further, entering fearlessly into the darker counsels of Providence, and relieving the old superstitions by some sensible and even religious reasons for his existence and place in nature. Say what we will to the contrary, — and it is creditable to the heart of man that it does doubt the final necessity of his existence and functions, and proves these only transient and mediatorial, — the Devil is felt to be a vast benefit to the present multitude, who could not get on at all without him. The Lord needs and so suffers an agent for the administrative ends of mortality, — a whipper in and secretary. The Devil is a friend in the guise of an enemy. We need him to measure our strength and weakness, to prove our virtue. Life, for the most part, is a contest, a devil's duel, with seconds few or many to provoke and stand sponsor for us, to each according to his mettle and provocation. An imp or two, if no more, is pitted against every one of us, — is one of us, if we knew it. To some there are seven of them, we read, and our merits and demerits are measured precisely by our management of the enemy, whether one or many."

In these remarks of Mr. Alcott reference is constantly made to that dramatic poem of Goethe's which

he had just been reading, "Faust," in which the Satanic element is shown as constantly present in a modern and realistic guise. Shakespeare, except in his "Othello," has hardly treated this theme at all; nor is there much common ground in the subjects chosen by these two great poets. Goethe was above all things wise, and in nothing does his wisdom appear more striking than in his estimate of Shakespeare as far above himself, and in his fixed resolve not to imitate one so unlike. He might almost have used in this connection the pregnant query of Emerson, "Why should I forego my own excellence to come short of Shakespeare's?" He had gifts of his own, many and great ones, — but not those of Shakespeare, whose nature was in so many points the opposite of his own. Ben Jonson could not measure Shakespeare, but he saw him, and in some particulars has well described him, in terms that could never be applied to Goethe: —

"The players have often mentioned it as an honor to Shakespeare," says Jonson in his Discoveries, "that he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, Would he had blotted a thousand ! which they thought a malevolent speech, who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted. He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature ; had an excellent fantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions ; wherein he flowed with that facility, that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped. His wit was in his own power : would the rule of it had been so too."

It could never be said of Goethe that he had not the rule of his own wit in his own power; for no man of genius was ever so deliberate and methodical. Jonson adds, — with that tone of patronage which the intervening centuries have made so amusing to us, — “But Shakespeare redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned.” This mild encomium is increasingly true of Goethe, as we withdraw more and more from the immediate conditions of his life, and judge him by the standards of genius and of benefit to mankind. Tested by these, Goethe must be greatly praised, and his influence on English literature, whether indirect or direct, has been every way salutary. For Goethe, even where he is pedantic, is profound; wherever he deals in small and trivial concerns, there is something just and wholesome in his method, and though he may check and discountenance spontaneity, this can do little harm to our literature, which is spontaneous rather than profound, except in those rare examples like Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Wordsworth, where it is both profound and spontaneous.

I do not find that Goethe had any knowledge of Chaucer; yet of all English authors this ancient poet was the nearest to Goethe's serene and tolerant temper, and he rose too, as Goethe did in Germany, from a dead level of mediocrity in his own age, to the very heights of humor and insight. There is a just judgment on this good old poet by Sir Philip Sidney which deserves to be quoted, — written in 1581,

and found in his "Defence of Poesy." "Chaucer," says Sidney, "undoubtedly did excellently in his *Troilus and Cressida*; of whom, truly, I know not whether to marvel more, either that he, in that misty time, could see so clearly, or that we, in this clear age, go so stumbly after him."

One was soon to come who would no longer stumble in following Chaucer, but would overtake and pass him by, so that even Shakespeare's contemporaries would have no doubt what his rank was. An obscure poet of that period, of whom we know almost as little as of Shakespeare himself, William Basse by name, commemorated Shakespeare's death in 1616 by this elegy, which is one of the best, though seldom quoted:—

"Renowned Spenser, lie a thought more nigh
To learned Chaucer; and, rare Beaumont, lie
A little nearer Spenser, to make room
For Shakespeare in your threefold, fourfold tomb.
But if precedency in death doth bar
A fourth place in your sacred sepulchre,
Under this sable marble of thine own,
Sleep, rare tragedian, Shakespeare! sleep alone:
Thy unmolested peace in unshared cave
Possess as lord, not tenant of thy grave.
That unto us and others it may be
Honor hereafter to be laid by thee."

Here the elegist recognizes, what time has fully attested, that Shakespeare is the lord paramount of English literature, holding a rank higher than Beaumont's, or Spenser's, or Chaucer's. A similar rank must be given, and has long been joyfully conceded,

to Goethe, among German writers. I do not agree with Dr. Bartol in the comparison which he drew between Schiller and Goethe, so disparaging to the former; but it is in accord with that severe Scripture which says, "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away." In the higher meaning of poetic greatness, Schiller "hath not," and therefore must surrender some part of his recent or present renown to the more masculine and original Goethe. In one respect, however, and an important one, he will always be superior to his friend, — in his recognition of that wholesome sexual morality which Goethe at all times considered too lightly, and in his youth and middle life so habitually transgressed. It will be long before English and American literature becomes accustomed to the tone of Goethe on this subject, — a coarse and worldly habit of mind, which came to him partly by nature, and partly from the French, Latin, and Greek books which he read in his youth far more than he read the better English or German authors. Indeed, there were few good German authors before Goethe and accessible to him; while Ovid and Catullus and Martial and the Greek poets, were open to him, and the amusing literature of France was in every German household where books were read at all. Goethe brings it almost as an accusation against Herder at Strassburg, that he made him think less favorably of Ovid than Goethe had been accustomed; but the "Roman Elegies," written at the age of thirty-eight, show that Ovid

was then his model much more than Herder. He had studied the more profound classical poets with profit, and his most perfect drama, so far as form and language go, — the “Iphigenia in Tauris,” — is the best result of this part of his education. It would be impossible to find in English literature so vivid a reproduction of the antique spirit, reinforced by the veracity of the Teuton, as this drama exhibits. Milton’s “Samson,” which in some points may be compared with it, is so strongly Hebraized that it little resembles in spirit the Greek dramas on which its form was modelled; while the “Prometheus” of Shelley, the “Atalanta” of Swinburne, and the pseudo-classical poems of Landor and of Browning, almost wholly lack the calm dignity of Goethe’s “Iphigenia.” As those who have preceded me have made little mention of this drama, I will quote a single passage in the earliest American translation, that of Dr. Frothingham of Boston, made some fifty years ago, when Goethe was almost an unknown name in America.

SONG OF THE PARCÆ IN “IPHIGENIA.”

IPHIGENIA (*soliloquizing*).

Within my ears resounds that ancient song, —
 Forgotten was it, and forgotten gladly, —
 Song of the Parcæ, which they shuddering sang
 When Tantalus fell from his golden seat.
 They suffered with their noble friend, — indignant
 Their bosom was, and terrible their song.
 To me and to my sisters in our youth
 The nurse would sing it, — and I marked it well.

THE SONG.

“The gods be your terror,
Ye children of men !
They hold the dominion
In hands everlasting,
All free to exert it
As listeth their will.

“Let him fear them doubly
Whome’er they ’ve exalted!
On crags and on cloud-piles
The altars are planted
Around the gold tables.

“Dissension arises;
Then tumble the feasters
Reviled and dishonored
In gulfs of deep midnight;
And look ever vainly
In fetters of darkness
For judgment that ’s just.

“But They remain seated
At feasts never failing
Around the gold tables.
They stride at a footstep
From mountain to mountain;
Through jaws of abysses
Steams toward them the breathing
Of suffocate Titans
Like offerings of incense, —
A light-rising vapor.

“They turn — the proud masters —
From whole generations
The eye of their blessing, —
Nor will in the children

The once well-beloved
Still eloquent features
Of ancestors see."

So sang the dark sisters !
The old exile heareth
That terrible music
In caverns of darkness,—
Remembereth his children,
And shaketh his head.

The Greek doctrine of divine vengeance and of irresistible destiny here set forth, (but which is beautifully softened in the play by the devotion and truthfulness of Iphigenia,) has scarcely found an entrance into English literature, where tragedy assumes a character more personal. The deepest sufferings of Shakespeare's heroes grow out of their own acts, and are not the result of foreordained or inherited guilt, as we may see in "King Lear" and "Othello." Goethe also gives this personal turn to all the tragedy which he brings forward ; but his "Iphigenia," with its deep realization of the antique tragic motives, may serve as a connecting link between ancient and modern tragedy. And so strong in his mind was the ancient form of presentation, that he adopted it to some extent in his next important work, his "Tasso," — which was mainly written in Rome, in 1786–88, as the "Iphigenia" was finished and privately brought out there. His "Egmont," on the other hand, the most dramatic of his plays, but far from the best, has nothing of the antique about it ; and still less has the first part of

"Faust," which, though dramatic in form, is rather a succession of declamations, spectacles, and songs, than a drama, strictly speaking. This fits it for operatic representation, in which it is most successfully and constantly given to the public. In itself, as a closet drama, or what Mr. Snider calls a "literary Bible," it is extremely foreign to the English and American mind, and there is nothing really akin to it in our literature, notwithstanding Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus" and the octogenarian Philip Bailey's "Festus," — which was "Faust" emasculated, trimmed and scented and sent forth on a harmless round among the circulating libraries, forty years ago.

Mr. Snider has so well set forth the origin and spirit of the Faust legend, and this exposition has been so well supplemented by Mr. Davidson, that I need only call attention to the manner in which it burst forth in English literature, — a single flash and explosion of flame and smoke from the Titanic cave of Christopher Marlowe's genius. This man — who, if he had lived, might have disputed Shakespeare's pre-eminence in dramatic poetry, as he was in fact Shakespeare's teacher and coadjutor during their hot youth in London — seems to have caught at the Faust myth almost as soon as it appeared anywhere in Europe in a printed form — though it had circulated from mouth to mouth at universities and among the people for more than half a century, when, in 1587, there appeared at Frankfort the "History of Dr. Johann Faust, the far-famed [*weitbeschreiber*] Sor-

cerer and Black-Artist [*Schwarzkünstler*]." From an English translation of this book, made in 1592, Marlowe is supposed to have taken his play, "The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus," which must have been written in 1592-93, for in June, 1593, Marlowe was killed in a tavern brawl. This fact and Marlowe's own character, which was that of an unbeliever and sensualist, gives a peculiar significance to his version of the Faust myth, which Goethe had thoughts of translating into German. Crabbe Robinson, when visiting Goethe in 1829, read to the old poet for the first time Milton's "Samson," and mentioned Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus." Goethe did not admire Milton so much as Byron, but of Marlowe's play he said, bursting out into an exclamation of praise, "How greatly is it all planned!"¹ The Diary of Crabbe Robinson, and the remarks and letters of Goethe after the visits of this indefatigable Englishman in 1829, give some anecdotes and remarks which will show how imperfect was Goethe's knowledge of English authors. Robinson says:—

"I took an opportunity to mention Milton, and found Goethe unacquainted with 'Samson Agonistes.' I read to him the first part, to the end of the scene with Dalila. He fully conceived the spirit of it, though he did

¹ It is curious that Meissner in his recent book, "English Actors of Shakespeare's Time in Austria," not only proves that Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus" in a German version was played at Grätz in 1608, but offers evidence to show that it was played in Frankfort in the autumn of 1592.

not praise Milton with the warmth with which he eulogized Byron, of whom he said that 'the like would never come again ; he was inimitable.' Even Ariosto was not so daring as Byron in the 'Vision of Judgment.' Goethe preferred to all the other serious poems of Byron the 'Heaven and Earth,' though it seemed almost satire when he exclaimed, 'A bishop might have written it.' He added : 'Byron should have lived to execute his vocation, — to dramatize the Old Testament. What a subject under his hands would the Tower of Babel have been ! Byron was indebted for the profound views he took of the Bible to the *ennui* he suffered from it at school.' . . . It was with reference to the poems of the Old Testament that Goethe praised the views which Byron took of Nature ; they were equally profound and poetical. 'He had not, like me, devoted a long life to the study of Nature, and yet in all his works I found but two or three passages I could have wished to alter.'" Robinson objected to the then common comparison of Manfred to Faust, and said, "Faust had nothing left but to sell his soul to the Devil, when he had exhausted all the resources of science in vain ; but Manfred's was a poor reason, — his passion for Astarte." Goethe smiled and said, "That is true." But then he fell back on the indomitable spirit of Manfred. Even at the last he was not conquered. And the impudence of Byron's satire he felt and enjoyed. Robinson pointed out "The Deformed Transformed" as really an imitation of "Faust," and Goethe especially praised that piece. Byron's verses on George IV., he said, were the sublime of hatred.

Returning to Milton, Goethe said to Robinson, as afterwards to Zelter, "Samson's confession of his guilt is in a

better spirit than anything in Byron. There is fine logic in all the speeches. Dalila's vindication of herself is capital; he has put her in the right." To one of Samson's speeches he cried out, "O the parson!" He thanked Robinson for making him acquainted with the "Samson," saying, "It gives me a higher opinion of Milton than I had before; it lets me more into the nature of his mind than any other of his works." To Zelter he wrote that "in Samson we acquire knowledge of a predecessor of Lord Byron who is as grand and comprehensive as Byron himself; but then the successor is as vast and wildly varied as the other appears simple and stately." Again he said, that "he never before met with so perfect an imitation of the antique in style and spirit" as in the "Samson." He told Robinson that Schiller's rendering of the witch-scenes in Macbeth was "detestable," — "but that was his way. You must let every man have his own character."

I do not find that Goethe had much to say of Landor, the man of England who most resembled him in some traits, and who valued highly and early, for an Englishman, the greatness of Goethe. In 1819, Southey wrote to Landor that a contributor to the county paper had spoken of Landor in "The Westmoreland Gazette" as the English poet who most resembled Goethe; adding, "I do not know enough of Goethe to judge how far this assertion may be right." Considering that Southey was the poet-laureate of England, and Goethe then seventy years old, the remark indicates how far apart were

English and German literature when Carlyle began to write. Landor did not read the "Iphigenia" till after Goethe's death, when he praised and criticised it. In 1837 he said of Goethe : "He was the wisest man of his time, as he was the most poetical. Drops hang from every work of Goethe's (that I have seen) of the very purest brightness, such as will never dry up nor fall. I admire much of his poetry and all his prose."

It is a pity that these two men could not have known each other, living as they did for half a century within a few hundred miles, and both engaged in the lonely pursuits of thought and imagination. They were not too much alike to have quarrelled, — except as Landor quarrelled with everybody, — while Goethe would have met that pettish trait by his wise habit of quarrelling with nobody. The Englishman, true to his national character, had more magnanimity, but ill-regulated ; the German had more wisdom, and deserved better than Landor that closing epigram which the Englishman wrote on himself, — styling it "The Dying Speech of an Old Philosopher" : —

"I strove with none, for none was worth my strife ;
Nature I loved, and next to Nature Art.
I warmed both hands against the fire of life, —
It sinks, and I am ready to depart."

VII.

GOETHE AS A PLAYWRIGHT.

BY WILLIAM ORDWAY PARTRIDGE.

WE may affirm without arrogance that we of the present day are better informed with regard to the highest artistic effects of the drama and the use of technical methods than were Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe. These are the words of Gustav Freitag, a German writer standing in all but the first rank of literary men and dramatists, and in the very foremost rank of dramatic critics. In writing a criticism upon the work of a man of Goethe's eminence, some part of which, at least, must be unfavorable, one is fain to take refuge under the shield of so great a critic, and thus avoid all possible charge of arrogance. Not only as a shield, however, have I quoted the above passage; it is of great significance as pointing out the two distinguishing characteristics of the successful playwright: (1.) A clear conception of highest artistic effects; (2.) The power to apply the best technical methods for the production of these.

We must here make a careful distinction between a playwright and a playwrighter. And in the present

paper we wish especially to insist upon this distinction. It is not our intention to criticise Goethe as a writer of plays, or his plays as mere literary productions, or what are called closet dramas ; but to consider him strictly as a playwright, and his plays as productions intended for representation on the stage. The dramatic value of a play is its effectiveness upon the stage. Whatever other merits a play may have, psychological, philosophical, or ethical, if it is not effective upon the stage, it lacks the first essential of a good drama. A psychological, philosophical, or ethical discussion may be cast in the form of dialogue, or even of a drama ; as, for example, the Dialogues of Plato, but these are not dramas in the proper sense. In order to arrive at clearness in this matter, we must first inquire what kind of effectiveness we have a right to expect from the drama, and, secondly, through what technical methods this effectiveness may be best attained. Of course we must not expect from the drama every kind of effectiveness, as, for instance, the effect of a philosophical argument, sermon, or oratorio ; we must not look for the effect produced by an intoxicating draught as Niagara.

First, then, let us consider what constitutes dramatic effectiveness. The question might be answered by *one word*, viz. the term "drama," which properly means action, so that a drama without action is a contradiction in terms. The essential element, then, in dramatic effectiveness is *action*. It must, however, be action of a peculiar kind, — in a word, it must

be motivated action, and the motive must at once be rational and apparent to the spectators. This Goethe himself believed, and has admirably expressed in words put into the mouth of Wilhelm Meister with regard to Shakespeare's characters: "These very mysterious and composite creatures of nature act before us in his plays, as if they were clocks with cases and dial-plates of crystal; they show in their determination the lapse of the hours, and at the same time we can recognize the wheels and springs that drive them."

The drama, then, in its true sense, is an action, a rounded and complete action, whose various parts or moments are evolved and connected by intelligible motives.

These motives may have two sources, that is, they may be either in the characters or in the exigencies of the action itself. For example, the fortunate termination of "Iphigenie" finds its motive in the perfect sincerity of Iphigenie's character. In "Egmont" also, as well as in "Götz," the hero's fate is plainly due to defects in his own character. On the other hand, the task imposed upon Hamlet of putting his uncle to death plainly arises from the exigency of circumstances,—the moral demands of his time,—and can in no wise be laid to the charge of Hamlet's character. It may here be remarked, that the ancient differs from the modern drama, in the source from which it mainly draws its motives. The ancient dramatists looked for their motives chiefly in the

exigences of circumstances, which to them were synonymous with necessity, destiny, or Fate, whence the majority of ancient plays are Fate-dramas. Modern dramatists, on the other hand, — and pre-eminently Goethe, — seek their motives chiefly in character, whence most good modern plays are, to a very large extent, character-dramas. This difference accounts, in some measure, for the superior effectiveness of the ancient drama, inasmuch as motives originating in external circumstances are far more easy to represent than those drawn from character. Probably the highest type of drama is that in which the motives are drawn equally from circumstances (not necessarily conceived as Fate) and from character. This balance of motives we find in Shakespeare's best plays, for example, "Hamlet" and "Romeo and Juliet." In a word, we may say that the prime and fundamental condition of dramatic effect, as such, is perfect motivation. A series of brilliant scenes, however effective otherwise, are not dramatic. In this the drama differs from history, that in the former the events are connected by perfect motivation; in the latter, merely by time and imperfect, often non-apparent motivation.

Although motivation is the first essential of dramatic effect, it is not, by itself alone, sufficient to insure that effect. Other and secondary conditions are requisite. In the first place, the motives must be of a particular kind, since all motives are not dramatic motives. True dramatic motives are such as an au-

dience feel to be human and rational, — such as men like themselves in similar circumstances would act upon. Consequently, all motives that affect only eccentric or exceptionally good or wicked characters, must be used sparingly, if at all. The same is true of all motives of a miraculous, revolting, or fantastic kind. What is regarded as miraculous, revolting, or fantastic, is not the same in all ages or among all peoples; for which reason every dramatist must keep very steadily in view his own time and public. For example, some things that the Greeks forbade to be represented on the stage as revolting, such as assassination, murder, and suicide, we permit, and applaud. The stabbing of Cæsar, the suicide of Brutus, the death of Romeo and Juliet, of Gretchen, etc., are examples of this.

In the second place, dramatic motives, in order to be effective, must produce certain results.

(1) They must produce passion and action, and not merely dialogue, however philosophical, beautiful, or moral it may be.

(2) The motivated action must be so arranged and rounded as to arouse a steadily increasing sympathy, expectation, and anxiety — or, as Aristotle puts it, pity and fear — on the part of the audience, and then to satisfy these emotions.

(3) The ultimate result of the whole action must be to solemnize the mind by revealing to it the workings of the human heart and the moral order of the universe, and to send an audience forth refreshed,

strengthened, and inspired for the duties of life, — in a word, it must result in what Aristotle calls *Purification*.

Having thus stated, in general terms, the true artistic effect of the drama, we come next to consider by what technical methods these results are to be obtained. Inasmuch as the first condition of artistic effectiveness in the drama is complete and thorough motivation, our first inquiry must relate to the mode in which this may be reached. It is evident that this will in large measure depend upon the choice of subject, the fact being that it is much easier to find motives for certain lines of action than for others. Indeed, however this choice may be influenced by fashion or by the intellectual and æsthetic idiosyncrasies of the author, the subject must always be one capable of being transformed into a dramatic idea, — that unital and initial germ from which the whole drama is developed. There is hardly any point in which the genius of an artist is more apparent, than in this ability to see what subjects are capable of being permeated with the living, causative, formative dramatic idea.

And this is especially true of the dramatist. The question of what is really dramatic has been much agitated, but one may affirm that dramatic, and more especially tragic subjects, are those containing the elements of some great moral collision, taking place in a sphere of life in which the characters must be supposed capable of expressing this collision in speech

and action. This collision itself must be of a kind to give ample opportunity for the display of passion and action. This regulation effectively excludes all subjects containing collisions which are fought out within the breast of the individual, or in philosophical and moral discussion with others. Moral collisions that lead to no outward action, but only to monologues or conversations, are essentially undramatic. It would follow, of course, that a subject could not be chosen from among a people of a low degree of culture, or a people whose lives are not dramatic. Granting now that the subject is properly chosen, the conditions specified being fulfilled, the question arises how the subject is to be developed so as to produce these dramatic effects, we have mentioned above; viz. (1.) abundant display of action and passion in the character; (2.) the excitement of a steadily increasing sympathy on the part of the audience, and the satisfaction of the same; (3.) the moral inspiration and physical refreshment that come from the clear presentation and solution of moral problems. To exhaust this question is not easy, and, in a brief lecture like this, only the more prominent means for producing effectiveness can even be mentioned.

In the first place, then, care must be taken to concentrate interest, and this can be done only by preserving the unity of action, which action must not be understood to mean a single event, but a connected series of events, or, as Aristotle says, a *praxis*. In every drama the action must be strictly *one*, — undivided. It

must then revolve about a single character, or a single group of characters, involved in the conception of the subject. What is true of the drama is true of every other art. A picture, for example, must have a single point of interest, about which everything else is grouped. It follows from this, that those accessory characters and groups which are necessary to the development of the plot, and as foils to the principal characters, must be subordinated, and not receive any prominence beyond what they derive from their relation to these characters. Any attempt to give them prominence on their own account would only distract attention, scatter interest, dilute sympathy, cause confusion, and diminish effectiveness.

We must here note that the unity of the actions so essential to the effectiveness of a drama, does not depend solely upon the unity or oneness of the characters, or central group. Actions belonging even to a single character do not necessarily form a dramatic unity. A drama is never a biography, nor a series of adventures or episodes. In other words, a mere historic or personal connection between events is utterly different from that relation which produces dramatic unity. A dramatic action, therefore, is one which not only has its centre in a single character, but must be a single action in the sense that all its parts are connected as cause and effect, and every event must tend to advance or relieve the progress of the action. And not only so, but the action must have a natural beginning in a *deed* or juncture forming the collision of the

piece ; and an ending, in which the problem involved in the collision is naturally solved. *Naturally* solved, I repeat, because there are unnatural solutions, and these are essentially undramatic. A natural solution is one whose elements are found in the action and characters of the piece itself. An unnatural solution is one violently introduced from without, in the shape of miracle, chance, or some catastrophe of nature. Each of these is a *Deus ex machina*, or, as the Italians say, a *salto mortale*, which is forever interdicted in art as nullifying its true purpose. Other unities have, at certain times, been insisted upon, especially those of time and place ; but these are unessential, and have almost universally been discarded.

In the second place, it is not only necessary to concentrate and sustain interest, but to arouse it properly. And this can be done only by putting the audience in possession of facts sufficient to enable them to understand the nature of the collision involved, and the relation of the different characters to it. This Aristotle happily calls the *δέσις*, or tying of the knot. This must be done in the opening scenes of a play, which in a certain sense must always be introductory. Any attempt to put the audience in possession of the necessary facts by means of a prologue, — though favored and practised by some dramatists, such as Euripides, Seneca, and Alfieri, — is inartistic, and bespeaks incapacity on the part of the dramatist. A prologue hardly becomes more artistic even when it

takes the form of a mere explanatory dialogue, in no way advancing the action of the play. The opening of a piece which puts the audience in possession of the necessary facts will, by a good artist, be so arranged as to be brief, and a part of the action of the play, for only in this way can it arouse the highest interest.

In the third place, the interest, once aroused, must be steadily sustained; which means, not that it must be kept uniformly at the same degree of intensity, but that it must gradually increase until it reaches its climax and satisfaction in the solution of the piece. In a word, we may say that the interest must be compound interest. At the same time, care must be taken to retard the interest until the climax can be fairly reached. This is perhaps the most difficult task imposed upon the playwright, inasmuch as it involves a profound knowledge of psychology and an immense power of grading and directing all the parts of his play to a single end. With this in view he must carefully avoid introducing anything, however tempting, not bearing directly upon the action of the play, and also the placing of less interesting scenes after more interesting ones; or in any way introducing mere explanatory matter without action. For this reason, long messages interrupting the action of the play, and similar things, should be avoided. A play in which scenes can be omitted or transposed, without affecting the interest of the piece, is by that fact alone a poor play, and argues an

inferior playwright. Perhaps the worst of all possible plays is one consisting of a series of scenes in which the action does not advance, or the characters are not brought into any different relation to each other at the end from that which they occupied at the beginning. Such plays are the "Hecuba" of Euripides, and the "Brunhilde," written some years ago for the actress Janauschek.

In the fourth place, the interest, having been aroused and sustained throughout the play, must in the end secure complete satisfaction. Such satisfaction we are wont to call poetic justice. By this we mean that every one of the principal characters must at the conclusion of the piece meet with the just reward of his deeds; thus impressing that most profound of all moral truths, often so dimly visible in our actual lives, namely, that there is an inexorable moral law ruling in the world, and giving to each man the exact reward of his deeds. Only in this way can a play produce that exhilaration and moral inspiration which are the ultimate tests of the value of a drama. But although a play, like every true work of art, ought to produce a moral effect, the artist's intention to produce this effect should never be apparent. In other words, a drama ought not, either in whole or in part, to be a sermon or moral lecture.

The moral effect, on the contrary, ought to be apparent in the very construction and action of the play, and to be deduced therefrom by a spontaneous action under the influence of emotion on the part of

the audience. We ought no more to look for a sermon in a play, than we do in the Venus of Melos or the Hermes of Praxiteles. True works of art, like lofty characters, exercise their influence, not through what they do or say, but through what they are. As Schiller puts it, "There is nobility even in the moral world. Common natures pay with what they *do*, — noble natures with what they are."

Such then are some of the principal and essential conditions of dramatic effectiveness: (1) choice of subject, noble and capable of being developed and motivated into scenes of action and passion, — in other words, into a dramatic unity; (2) absolute unity and probability of action; (3) interest artistically enlisted, sustained, and satisfied, at last, by poetic justice. In order to deal with Goethe as upright judges, and not arbitrarily as tyrants, we have now only to apply the principles laid down, in all their rigor, to his dramatic productions, — or, at least, to such of them as may be supposed in any way to determine his position as a playwright.

In doing so, we shall deal mainly with those plays which may be regarded as marking stages in his dramatic development, — "Götz von Berlichingen," "Egmont," "Torquato Tasso," "Iphigenie," and "Faust." Although Goethe had previously written some smaller pieces for special occasions, his career as a serious playwright begins with "Götz von Berlichingen." This play, of which the first draft was written in six weeks, in the year 1771, was con-

ceived under the influence of a powerful enthusiasm due to the reading of Shakespeare. With respect to the effect of this first acquaintance with the work of the English dramatist, Goethe himself says, speaking through the lips of Wilhelm Meister : —

“ I cannot recollect that any book, any man, any incident of my life, has produced such effects on me. . . . They seem as if they were performances of some celestial Genius, descending among men to make them, by the mildest instructions, acquainted with themselves. They are no fictions ! you would think, while reading them, you stood before the unclosed awful books of Fate, while the whirlwind of most impassioned life was howling through the leaves, and tossing them fiercely to and fro. The strength and tenderness, the power and peacefulness of this man, have so astonished and transported me, that I long vehemently for the time when I shall have it in my power to read further.”

It was in this frame of mind that Goethe wrote “*Götz*,” drawing his theme from the autobiography of the old national hero of the Iron Hand, a theme capable of being treated in the manner of Shakespeare. He wrote under the influence of an imitative enthusiasm, and not in accordance with any theory of dramatic art. Indeed, at that time he had not arrived at any such theory. This fact accounts in great measure for the merits and the defects of the work. The defects are very great ; but it has real merits, and, indeed, from a purely dramatic point of view, this piece, though the earliest, is unques-

tionably the most popular and effective of Goethe's plays.

Nor is this fact difficult to explain. Shakespeare's influence upon Goethe had been of a most healthy and stimulating kind. It had roused the spontaneity of his genius, which was naturally great, and supplied him with admirable models, without subjecting him to any æsthetic rules or theories. And this last negative advantage was perhaps as valuable as the other two positive ones. For so strong in all Germans is the tendency to work according to rules addressed to the understanding, — and so fatal is this tendency to all German artists, even those of high genius, — that Goethe could hardly have failed to be injured in his work by any such restrictions.

This indeed, we shall see, actually took place with much damage to Goethe's dramatic work, after he became interested in dramatic theory. Not only will theory never make an artist, but it may even damage one, especially if he be a German.

"Götz von Berlichingen," in spite of its popularity and its extraordinary value in the history of German literature, will not stand the test of vigorous dramatic criticism. The subject, indeed, is well chosen, being one in which the unity of action might easily have been preserved, strict motivation introduced, and abundant opportunities offered for scenes of action and passion.

But unfortunately Goethe was unable to permeate this subject with a dramatic idea, and hence the

work remains a series of interesting but disconnected scenes, which do not form in any sense a dramatic unity. The interest is scattered and broken into fragments, with neither proper gradation, climax, nor satisfactory solution. Much crude historical matter, connected, as historical matter usually is, by mere chronological succession, instead of dramatic motivation, remains to burden the play. The result is, that the catastrophe does not follow necessarily from the conditions of the piece, and leaves the demands of poetic justice unsatisfied. Götz, it is true, is a tragic character, and this for two reasons. The former of these is his thoughtless, incautious, and fond confidence in Weislingen, a man who had abundantly proved himself fit for a place in the lowest circle of Dante's *Inferno*. The latter was his failure to see that his efforts were directed against the natural advance of civilization, and in favor of an obsolete feudalism. At the same time, these defects are not sufficient to reconcile us to the hero's dying as a coward might, with a feeling that his whole heroic life had been worse than vain. This inartistic ending is the more to be regretted, inasmuch as it might easily have been avoided. The fault is due in part to Goethe's following too closely the facts of history, in defiance of the æsthetic law which demands poetic justice; that is, a recognition of a man's virtues as well as of his defects. But it was due perhaps even more to the circumstance, that, when Götz was written, the author was in revolt against

the German political system, just as Schiller was in revolt against the social system when he wrote "The Robbers," and wished to excite popular indignation against that system by making Götz appear as a martyr to it. This purpose to excite indignation must be set down as inartistic, as all tendentious purpose in art is.

In spite of all these great defects, the play has a certain amount of confused effectiveness, both in the action, and in the characters. Notwithstanding Götz's lamentable ending, he and his little group of associates remain inspiring characters; and this is so true, that the play has always, perhaps more than any other of Goethe's works, been a favorite upon the stage. This is certainly only in a small degree due to its artistic merits, since the interest which it excites is not, strictly speaking, a dramatic interest; nevertheless, the general tone of the play is so healthy, and its action so full of varied life, that the ultimate effect is in a large degree inspiring and exhilarating. As early as 1799, the drama of "Götz von Berlichingen" was thought worthy of a translation into English by so great an artist as Sir Walter Scott. It ought perhaps to be remarked that Goethe wrote three, if not four, editions of "Götz," and that only the third was really intended for the stage.

"Götz von Berlichingen" can claim two great merits. It was the first truly national German play, and it was also the play in which was first fully realized what Lessing and others had so earnestly striven for

without completely achieving, — a breach with traditional rules, and the complete liberation of the German stage from the artificial and conventional drama of France, which had so baneful an influence on the literature and morals of Germany. The work has thus the merit of marking a most important epoch in German literature.

There must have been considerable outcry on the part of the critics against this departure from dramatic rules and precepts,¹ and this must have come, in part at least, from critics whom Goethe felt bound to respect; for we find him writing to his friend Kestner: "I am now engaged upon a drama for the boards, in order that the fellows may see that, if I please, I can observe rules and portray morality and sentimentality." To what drama Goethe here refers we cannot say with certainty. It may have been "*Faust*," the idea of which was fermenting in his mind at this time. Be this as it may, the first draft of "*Faust*" which, in the main, was written shortly after "*Götz*," though not published till many years later (1790), corresponds accurately with Goethe's description, inasmuch as it follows dramatic rules perhaps more than his other dramas, and deals with morality and sentimentality. And although "*Faust*," as a completed work, did not appear till sixty years later, we may here insert what has to be said concerning its dramatic properties. Paradoxical as it may seem, "*Faust*" is a drama to which the standard of dra-

¹ See the scoff of Frederic the Great, cited on page 158.

matic criticism should not be applied, if we do not wish to make it appear a failure, as, indeed, Vischer and other eminent critics have shown it to be. Indeed, as a whole, it does not belong to the class of acting plays, but to that of literary and philosophical dramas. The dramatic idea in itself, though well and profoundly chosen, is far too vast for a single drama, and almost even for a trilogy. Moreover, many of the scenes are almost incapable of being presented on the stage, such as the two *Walpurgisnächte* and the Prologues. It is true that the whole is now annually played at Weimar, but under circumstances altogether exceptional, and such as are hardly possible on any ordinary stage. Moreover, the dramatic unity is frequently violated, the scenes being often bound together, not by dramatic motivation, but by the personal identity of Faust. In fact, it is largely a series of episodes in the life of an individual, Faust; and according to Aristotle, the episodic drama is the worst of all. The only part that lies within the sphere of strictly dramatic criticism is the original fragment, published in 1790, founded on popular legend and embodying Faust's relation to Gretchen. This part will stand the severest dramatic criticism. The subject is well chosen, and capable of being thoroughly permeated by the dramatic idea. It also affords excellent motives for scenes of action and passion. It rises naturally to a climax, and descends as naturally to the catastrophe, which satisfies all the claims of poetic justice. The interest is sustained

throughout, and the final effect is, in the highest degree, solemnizing and purifying. It cannot be otherwise than a matter of regret that Goethe did not complete his "Faust" in accordance with his original conception; for the additions which, after his metaphysical and critical studies, he made even to the first part, not to speak of the second, essentially injured the unity of the *action*, and considerably impaired its effectiveness for the stage.

The other three plays of Goethe which we purpose to criticise as typical productions are "Egmont," "Iphigenie," and "Tasso." These dramas were written nearly at the same time,—between 1777 and 1789, when Goethe was in the full possession of his powers. They may therefore be considered his highest dramatic efforts. First came "Egmont," 1777 to 1785. The subject is an event in the rebellion of the Netherlands against Spanish domination, and therefore may be considered a *national* subject. Indeed, it is said that the play was intended as a companion to "Götz." Here, for the first time, we see the baneful effects of Goethe's attempt to apply dramatic rules in a comprehensive way, and the result as a whole is a mechanical production, devoid of dramatic unity.

This criticism may appear unjust, especially as the play has held the stage for so many years, and possesses a certain effectiveness. But, after all, this effectiveness is not truly dramatic, being due, in great part, to a few graceful love scenes scattered through

it, and in some degree also to a certain historic and political interest, which has no artistic bearing. The chief effectiveness is derived, not from the dramatic idea, which is political, but from a series of domestic scenes utterly foreign to his idea. For the fundamental idea, or collision, is this: A nobleman finds himself placed between duty to his conquered and rebelling countrymen, and fealty to their conqueror, under whom he has accepted service. Being of a generous, brave, tender, reckless, and unreflective character, fond of pleasure and popularity, he countenances his countrymen in their seditious practices, thereby giving offence to the conquerors, from whom, nevertheless, he has not sufficient patriotism or foresight, as Orange had, to disconnect himself.

This tragic weakness brings about his destruction. To such a political idea, the domestic scenes between Egmont and Clärchen are plainly alien, and, as a matter of fact, they have no bearing upon the action of the play, and in no way tend to relieve or develop it. Indeed, the only case when she in any way enters into the main action of the drama is after the catastrophe is certain, when her ghost appears as a *Deus ex machina* in the garb of Freedom, from a supernatural world, whose introduction is not justified by the plan of the play. It is a rule of dramatic art, that the miraculous and supernatural should not be introduced into a play unless they have been suggested as credible agents early in the plot, as they are in the case of the witches in "Macbeth," the ghost

in "Hamlet," and others. Indeed, the introduction of Clärchen in the winding up of "Egmont" is inartistic, being unmotivated, and, as Schiller said, operatic.

Beside the weakness of the termination, the play has other glaring defects. Many of the scenes are too prolix, and so loosely connected that they not only could be, but actually are, transposed when the play is represented; which shows that the interest is not properly graded. A number of the scenes consist of mere padding of talk: indeed, Goethe might, without impropriety, have called those scenes, in which the citizens so fortuitously meet to gossip, the choric part, and assigned to his play a chorus of Netherlanders. There is no binding and loosing in the play, and of course no Peripeteia. On the whole, then, in spite of its popularity, from the standard of just dramatic criticism the play must be regarded as a failure.

In passing from "Egmont" to "Iphigenie," we suddenly enter a new world. "Iphigenie" is almost in every respect a complete contrast to the play we have just considered. Here Goethe was dealing with a subject which had already been dramatized by two great playwrights, Euripides and Racine.

The main incidents of the play, therefore, were already given in the title, "Iphigenie in Tauris," and a new motivation alone remained to be supplied. This, it must be admitted, Goethe has accomplished with admirable taste and success. In fact, the mo-

tivation is so entirely his own, that he has given us one of the best of character-dramas, instead of a fate-drama. The dramatic unity is preserved throughout: the tying and untying of the knot, although classically simple, are managed in a masterly way. Strangely enough, although the characters are in large measure foils to each other, they are all noble and dignified. The character of Iphigenie, combining princess and priestess, is perhaps the purest and stateliest that Goethe or any dramatist ever conceived. One lingers before it with ever-increasing delight, as he does before the Venus of Melos, or the Immaculate Conception of Murillo. One especial feature of the "Iphigenie" is the limpid flow of its stately language, which has, perhaps, never been excelled. To use the words of Keats, it reads like the large utterance of the early gods.

Though entirely modern and un-Greek in tone and sentiment, in form it is as perfect and self-contained as the Parthenon of Iktinos; and, like the Parthenon, its effect is calculated for an audience of highly developed taste. The play contains little external action or violent expression of passion to attract a popular audience. Its strength lies mainly in its psychological *truthfulness*, which in the hands of highly cultivated actors can be made very impressive. Although exception might be taken to a few features of the play, such as the Euripidean prologue, and the somewhat too epigrammatic and philosophical character of the dialogue, "Iphigenie" must be regarded as the

most finished of Goethe's dramatic efforts; and this is clearly shown by its ultimate effect, which leaves the mind in the attitude of solemnity, purity, and lofty courage.

From "Iphigenie" we pass to the last of Goethe's typical plays, "Torquato Tasso," finished in 1789. In the choice and development of this subject, Goethe had to depend upon his own resources; and, when we compare the play with "Iphigenie," we see at once how much he owed in the latter to his Greek predecessor, especially in the matter of incident. "Tasso" is almost purely a character-drama, and is well motivated from beginning to end. Nevertheless, the result in the two cases is very different. What in "Iphigenie" was pure, living classical stateliness, has here become rigidity, coldness, formality. Instead of a Parthenon of lucent Pentelic marble, we now enter the ice palace of a Russian autocrat. The cardinal defects of this play are largely due to a false choice of subject, which does not lend itself to dramatic development. An almost sure test of a good play is that its dramatic idea, or collision, can be fully stated in a few words. "Macbeth," "Hamlet," "Iphigenie," may be cited as examples of this.

In "Tasso," on the contrary, it is extremely difficult to state, even in a prolix way, the dramatic idea. The truth is, Goethe took an incident from the life of an historic character, and was unable to lift it out of its historic wording into the refinement of a living dramatic idea. A plebeian poet of passionate tem-

perament finds patronage and high favor at the court of a powerful prince. In the moment of his highest triumph, he is brought face to face with another favorite of the court,—a nobleman of practical and diplomatic turn of mind. In the conflict which follows between the two natures, the one-sidedness of each is brought out. A dispute arises, which has to be settled by the prince according to a purely conventional and unjust standard; bringing disgrace upon the poet, who was really blameless, and acquitting the culpable nobleman. Partly under the influence of the prince, the nobleman is induced to admit his wrong, and sue for reconciliation, which he ultimately effects, and draws from the poet an enthusiastic acknowledgment of his superiority. This story, though long, does not really state the entire plot of the play, for it does not include the very important *rôles* played by the two heroines. But this fact only bears out the statement that the idea is undramatic. And indeed these *rôles* are almost unrelated to the main collision,—so much so that at the end the relation between Tasso and the Princess is left entirely unsolved. The same inferior and fragmentary art to which we called attention in “Egmont” reappears here. The effectiveness of the play when represented is due in large measure to a few delicately constructed and tender love scenes, which have no real relation to the dramatic idea. In the arts of the playwright and the novelist, love scenes are too frequently the refuge of the destitute.

They are the refuge of the destitute, because they are sure to interest a large public, whatever the character of the work may be in which they appear. In introducing such scenes Goethe shows that he was a true German himself, and knew the character of his countrymen. In a similar manner, a French painter who cannot attract attention by legitimate means will frequently resort to the introduction of nude figures, sure that under any circumstances this will appeal to something in his countrymen, if not to their artistic sense. To sum up the dramatic characteristics of the play, we must say that, although conforming in many ways to the rules of art, as a drama it is a distinct failure, and was so considered even by Goethe's contemporaries; and at the present day the play has almost disappeared from the stage.

This ends our consideration of the acknowledged typical dramas of Goethe. If time permitted, other minor dramas might have been considered with interest, but the general result would not thereby be materially affected. What, then, we may ask, is that result? Is it such as to justify us in affirming that Goethe was a great playwright? Without detracting from Goethe's greatness in other directions, and indeed heartily acknowledging it, we must, in accordance with the verdict of rational criticism, answer the question in the negative. And in order to justify this answer, we have only to generalize what we have already stated in particular. Goethe's short-

comings as a playwright may be said to be four in number:—

1. A fundamental lack of the dramatic sense,—which in great measure prevented him from recognizing what subjects were capable of being transformed into dramatic ideas, and so becoming dramatically effective.

2. A fundamental lack of constructive power,—which prevented him from producing works distinguished by organic unity; thus leaving his dramas, either a series of almost disconnected scenes, like “*Gotz*” and “*Egmont*,” with an operative termination like the latter, or united only by an abstract notion, not arising out of the dramatic idea, but essential to it, as in “*Tasso*” and in “*Faust*.”

3. The lack of passionate expression and vigorous action, leading him to dwell upon descriptions of characters and scenes, rather than upon living actions and stirring events.

4. His inability to deal with the legitimate rules of dramatic art,—at one time leading him to set them aside altogether, at another time allowing him to be completely overmastered by them.

Of these cardinal defects some may be attributed to Goethe’s nationality, while one, at least, namely, the lack of constructive power, must be ascribed to Goethe himself. As compared with the other leading nations of Europe, the Germans may be said to be an undramatic people, deficient in passionate expression, overflowing energy, and above

all in the keen dramatic sense of the ludicrous and incongruous, — which is the salt of active life and which is incompatible with their phlegmatic temperament and extreme sentimentality. That these national drawbacks were not necessarily fatal to a great dramatic genius, when relieved by a strong constructive ability, was shown in the case of Schiller, and in a lower degree by Lessing and Iffland; all of whom, though inferior to Goethe in other respects, are superior to him as playwrights. Goethe's failure as a playwright, therefore, was due in large measure to his lack of constructive power, — that is, of the ability to hold many things together and reduce them to a living organism permeated by a dramatic current. This defect appears not only in Goethe's dramatic books, but also in his works, — notably in "Meister," — and may account for his failure in the plastic and graphic arts. As a poet Goethe was essentially epic and lyric, but not dramatic. Germany owes him her best modern epic, namely, "Hermann and Dorothea," and a large number of the best lyrics in the language. And, in confirmation of this, it is a curious fact that Goethe's most perfect drama, "Iphigenie," is, like the Greek plays which he imitated, a combination of epic and lyric elements.

If we were to look into the facts and habits of Goethe's life for an explanation of his failure as a playwright, we might perhaps find it in three things: (1) his tendency to allow a long interval to elapse

between his first conception of a piece and its execution and completion, his views respecting life and art changing materially in the mean while ; (2) his exceptional good fortune, which left him untouched by many forms of human experience ; (3) his ever-increasing withdrawal from the world of human strife and suffering, which is pre-eminently the dramatic world. The first of these facts accounts for much that is fragmentary and inorganic in "Faust," while the second furnishes a sufficient reason for Goethe's inferiority as a playwright to the poor, much-tried Schiller, who during the most of his brief life was deep in the world's hardships and sufferings. It remains forever true, that "we learn in suffering what we teach in song."

But if, in a technical sense, we cannot speak highly of Goethe as a playwright, we must not fail to acknowledge his other great merits in connection with the drama, and his abundant efforts to raise it from coarseness, conventionality, and thralldom to French ideas, and to make it an integral part of the national literature of Germany.

By his long-continued personal efforts in connection with the stage at Weimar, he raised the standard of acting in Germany, and by his admirable and sympathetic criticisms he elevated the standard of dramatic taste ; and last, but not least, by introducing Shakespeare to the notice of his countrymen, he gave a lasting impulse for good to German literary effort and life.

Besides all these great merits, his failure as a playwright — insist upon it as we may and as we have a right to do — seems but a spot on the face of the sun, which we mention oftener in order to excuse something in ourselves, than to detract from the life-giving fulness of that luminary.

VIII.

DAS EWIG-WEIBLICHE.

By MRS. E. D. CHENEY.

Alles Vergängliche
 Ist nur ein Gleichniss ;
 Das Unzulängliche
 Hier wird's Ereigniss ;
 Das Unbeschreibliche
 Hier ist es gethan,
 Das Ewig-Weibliche
 Zieht uns hinan.¹

FAUST, *close of the Second Part.*

THESE words are the ripened fruit of the whole study, thought, love, and life of the greatest poet and

¹ Translations:—

All that is changeable
 Is but a fable ;
 Lo, the intangible
 Reached here and stable !
 More than we humanly
 Dreamed, here is done,
 While the Aye Womanly
 Wafteth us on.
 J. S. DWIGHT.

All that doth pass away
 Is but a fable ;
 All that eludes is made
 Here true and stable.

The Indescribable
 Here it is done,
 The Ever Womanly
 Beckons us on.

All things transitory
 But as symbols are sent ;
 Earth's insufficiency
 Here grows to event.
 The Indescribable
 Here it is done, —
 The Woman-Soul leadeth us
 Upward and on !

BAYARD TAYLOR.

thinker of our century; of one who did not alone receive and repeat traditions of the past, — deeply as he studied their meaning, — but who fully accepted the scientific method of investigation, and dared to confront every question that suggested itself to his mind. They are not the expression of youthful fancy, nor the impulse of early passion. We may almost say they are the last important utterance of his mind, the climax of all his thought, all his experience. They are the final summing up in his thought of human life. Sin is forgiven, the meaning of this world's experience as symbol of eternity is declared, all that the human heart has longed for is promised, and the whole closes with the words that seem to include everything, —

“Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan.”

What a promise of continued life and fresh creation is there in these words! what abounding love, what infinite hope! They are the closing words of the great drama of “Faust.”

Faust was the burden of Goethe's life, — a task long delayed, but never relinquished; and in the final Chorus into which the whole grand symphony is resolved, as the simple Hymn of Joy concludes Beethoven's glorious Ninth, occurs a noble fugue, and the same thought is repeated in differing form, as Faust is released from his slavery to evil and welcomed into new life. As in the First Part of “Faust” the Chorus of Angels and of Women first awaken human love and

sympathy, so in the Second they again minister to him; and it is finally the same Margaret who asks to teach the soul escaping from sense and sin,¹ and it is the *Mater Gloriosa* who points out the path:

“Komm hebe dich zu höhern Sphären!
Wenn er dich ahnet, folgt er nach.”²

And finally the Chorus Mysticus sums up the meaning of the drama in the pregnant lines:

“Alles Vergängliche,
Ist nur ein Gleichniss;
Das Unzulängliche
Hier wird's Ereigniss;
Das Unbeschreibliche
Hier ist es gethan,
Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan.”

Let us pause to note that Goethe gives to his expression in this last verse the abstract form; he uses the neuter article and noun, — *Das Ewig-Weibliche*. It is not the masculine or feminine personified. The whole drama has been drawing out the most abstract ideas into expression in its varied and motley groups, and in the previous verse, Doctor Marianus has raised the feminine personality to its very utmost expression, — *Jungfrau* (maiden), *Mutter* (mother), *Königin* (queen), *Göttin* (goddess). But the mystic

¹ Vouchsafe to me that I instruct him:
Still dazzles him the Day's new glare.

² Rise thou; to higher spheres conduct him,
Who, feeling thee, shall follow there.

Chorus goes a step further, and carries the thought out of personalities again into the supreme abstract idea of womanhood. This seems intentional on the poet's part. Faust has learned at last the meaning of mortal life, the value of human relations, but this is not the end. What has glorified and blessed it all becomes now immortal and infinite: it is no single loved one, but the Eternally Womanly which is henceforth to lead him upward and on.

We are tempted to ask, Did Goethe know what a great sentence he had penned? Did he mean all that can be extracted from this line? Every great poetic word is a flower which folds up in itself and brings to ripeness precious seed innumerable, and capable of producing even fairer flowers and richer fruit, and this was a flower of genius, full of infinite, inexhaustible meaning. Goethe himself says of the Second Part of Faust: "If it contains many problems, (inasmuch as, like the history of man, the last-solved problem ever produces a new one to solve,) it will nevertheless please those who understand by a gesture, a wink, a slight indication. They will find in it more than I could give."

Doubtless this line sounded for years in Goethe's soul as a prophecy and inspiration, not as a rigid formula; but that he spoke it with full sense of its deep meaning and truth is plain from the place which he has given it, and the relation it bears to all his thought. It is not an isolated statement. It is not the dramatic utterance of an individual mind, it is the

word of the mystic chorus which sums up the whole drama of life. Goethe might have used the more general term ; he might have sung the Divine Humanity which is expressed in Christian thought. Why does he find his true expression in "Das Ewig-Weibliche"? Why does he use this word, which implies difference of sex, and the eternally directing function of one aspect of the eternal thought, instead of employing a phrase that would express the whole?

Goethe's habitual thought was as far as possible from any Indian idea of reabsorption in Divinity and the loss of personality. He recognized that when a life was achieved, it became a living force,¹ although he questioned whether every apparent human life accomplished this purpose.² It is not, therefore, from any thought of the extinction of personality as the final consummation of life is approached, that Goethe uses this abstract term, but to express the essential nature of the power which he thus invokes. It is

¹ In a letter to Zelter, Goethe says : "Let us continue our work until one of us, before or after the other, returns to ether at the summons of the World Spirit ! Then may the Eternal not refuse to us new activities, analogous to those wherein we have been tested ! If He shall also add memory and a continued sense of the Right and the Good, in his fatherly kindness, we shall then surely all the sooner take hold of the wheels which drive the cosmic machinery." — Bayard Taylor's notes, p. 532.

² He said to Eckermann : "I do not doubt our permanent existence, for Nature cannot do without the entelechie. But we are not all immortal in the same fashion, and in order to manifest one's self in the future life as a great entelechie one must also become one." — Taylor, p. 516.

not the feminine in its manifestation, but in its original character.

In our effort to develop the meaning of this line, let us trace out, so far as brief limits will allow, Goethe's thought of Woman. In many an old mythologic story, Woman is the tempter, the embodiment of the material side of life,—that which prevents the soul from finding its true relation to the Divine. Can it be that this is the reversal of the truth? that it is by the influence of the womanly that man alone can be saved from being cut off from the Eternal, the Universal, the Divine,—from the only damnation possible, the breaking of the bond which binds all together? The light in which Woman is regarded is always significant of the philosophy and character of a people, and whether she is revered and honored as helper and sanctifier, or courted as a pleasure, or despised as an inferior, shows the quality of the soul. To man's feeling for Woman might well be applied Wordsworth's thoughtful lines:

“ Who feels contempt for any living thing
Has faculties which he has never used,
And thought with him is in its infancy.”

I find nowhere in Goethe's writings an expression of contempt for Woman as such. If there are any seeming exceptions, they are simply dramatic utterances, appropriate to the coarse or frivolous persons who utter them. But he does not shrink from as thorough analysis and as realistic treatment of women as of every other subject. He depicts women as he has

seen and known them, studying them in all classes and conditions. We find the holy Saint, whose life is in rapt communion with God, — Mignon, who has wandered from some far-off land, an unbidden guest, and finds herself lost in this strange world, where even love fails her as a guide, — the stately Iphigenie, the practical Theresa, the commonplace Frau Melina, the unimpassioned Charlotte, — Lotte, the good sister, — the flippant Phillina, and Margaret, the child of Nature, — all are women, and he recognizes them as souls following out the law of their own natures, and influencing those with whom they are connected by force of character and will. They are not women alone, they are living wholes. He always recognizes the value of Woman's own life in relation with, but not simply as supplementary to, that of man. When he glorifies the household, it is not merely as a place for man to rest from past labors, and fit himself for new ones, but it is as the kingdom of the most precious life, to which all other service should be subordinate; — to rule here is to rule at the centre. That a woman's life should be fully wrought out from her own centre of being, is just as important as that a man's should be, — as is shown in Theresa, in Natalia, and in the whole tenor of his thought.

How earnestly he sought to understand Woman's life from her own stand-point, and not as men look at it, is shown by his interest in "The Confessions of a Fair Saint," which is introduced, seemingly somewhat irrelevantly, into his "Wilhelm Meister," though

she is found to have deeply influenced the other characters. It is a genuine experience of a woman's soul, of which a mystical religious feeling has taken possession, without driving out the natural thoughts and feelings of her sex. As such, he gives it without comment, as he might a scientific discovery. She is a striking instance of a most womanly woman finding ultimate satisfaction in spiritual life, without its full expression in human relations.

In an early article of Goethe's, published in 1772, when he was but twenty-three years old, appears his thought of the profound influence of Woman. It is a notice of the poems of a Polish Jew, who seems to have been a young and fickle lover. He says: "O Genius! be it publicly known that neither shallowness nor weakness is the cause of his fickleness. Let him but find a maiden who is worthy of him." Goethe then describes the maiden full of charms and home graces:—

"Should these two find each other, they at once divine what an embodiment of bliss each has secured in the other, and that they never can be parted. Then let him stammer—foreshadowing, hoping, enjoying—what none with words have ever spoken out, none with tears, none with the long lingering look and the soul in it. Truth and living beauty will then be in his songs, not the glittering-baubles floating in so many German melodies."

Lotte, in "The Sorrows of Werther," is one of those wonderful creations of genius whom you cannot analyze more than a beloved child. Grimm says:—

“Up to the time of her appearance, Klopstock’s Fanny had been the highest ideal of womanhood in Germany; but Lotte at once won all hearts. After the appearance of Werther, young girls named Lotte refused to be called so any longer, feeling themselves unworthy to bear the name. . . . Lotte is the most simple and lovely German maiden, of whom nothing special is to be said. She enjoys dancing, she loves poetry, she *can be* enthusiastic; but she only needs to hear the slightest noise in the house, and she leaps down from the heavens into her wonted sphere, and is nothing but a housewife.”

How sanitary must have been the influence which made this the ideal of German girls!

In Goethe’s own life the influence of Woman predominates. His “Wahrheit und Dichtung aus meinem Leben,” the review of his own development, dwells upon his relations of love and friendship to various women, far more than upon matters of statesmanship or learning. He was truly born of his mother’s nature. Her traits are reproduced in him, while from his rich, pedantic father came the formality, the net-work of convention, the shell of worldly environment, which surrounded and obscured his life. Grimm says: “Goethe’s father can be set aside: we do not need him to understand Goethe. But his mother is inseparable from him; she forms a part of his being; she understood him from the beginning, she divined him.” Educated with his sister, a noble type of the intellectual woman, says Grimm, “he was from youth better acquainted with women than

with men." But in spite, or more truly in consequence, of this strong influence from genuine women, Goethe was decidedly a masculine man. The feminine by its polarity developed the full force of his character. The calmness and self-poise, the absence of self-devotion in his nature, the joy in pursuit rather than fruitful delight in possession of the desired object, the centripetal force which made all things serve him,—intellectual traits which led to the false appearance of moral selfishness and coldness in affection,—mark this development of the masculine. But they never prevented him from recognizing the great truth of that relation whose leadings he steadily followed through all his life and thought, until he expressed it in the immortal line,—

“Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan.”

It is for the truth of relation that we come into mortal existence,—not to know ourselves, not to save ourselves, not to be ourselves except in relation,—so that the individual is bound again to the universal. The relation of Man to Woman is typical of this great law. As light and darkness show forth each other, so Man and Woman are fully revealed only in their relation to each other. Throughout the universe, only relation is creative. Goethe sees that not identity, but union in difference, is the attitude of Man and Woman. When Man and Woman see each other, they begin to apprehend the Universe.

“When I saw thee, all other things
 Appeared to me more bright ;
 I looked not on thee, but on them
 In thy reflected light ;
 Nor knew if it were they or thou
 That filled me with delight.”

Then each learns that its own self is not complete, can only be perfected by fitting itself to others, accepting the welfare of others as more its own than its own personality, —

“When each the other loves, and loves himself no more.”

This is love and piety ; and the Masculine and Feminine, however embodied, do ever this service to each other. As a noble woman thus serves man, so says Dante, —

“The like in lady doth a man of worth.”

Separation is the first step which makes creation, development, life, possible, — not one, but two. We must conceive of two before we can have relation, however we may still see that the two are one. How constantly this thought of relation runs through all Goethe's study and life ! “Nothing is fair or good alone.” It must be judged by all. Grimm says, “Goethe was persuaded that all phenomena stand in mutual relation, and therefore nothing can be demonstrated by the study of isolated parts.”

“Truly doth Nature all things tell,
 Nature hath neither shell nor kernel,
 Whole everywhere, at each point thou canst learn all ;
 Only examine thine own heart
 Whether *thou* shell or kernel art.”

“Wouldst thou truly study Nature,
Seek the whole in every feature.

Newton taught the doctrine of a definite number of independent colors; but with Goethe color is the relation between light and darkness; white is the color of light, and black of darkness. All its beauty and variety come from the fact that light is never wholly lost, darkness never wholly escaped. It is a grand generalization, if it has not yet been corroborated by analysis. So too, in his great biological discovery, he cannot accept an independent creation of leaf, flower, and seed. They stand in relation to each other not alone by mutual utility, but by development and the possibility of exchange of function and reconversion into each other.

“All in their forms are kindred, and yet no one like another;
So this wonderful choir points to a half-hidden law.”

How deeply he felt the spiritual significance of this law, as running through all spheres of being, is shown by the poem which he addresses to his beloved one, in which he carries up the analogy from the plant to friendship and love. After a description of the flower, as scientifically true as it is poetic, he concludes:

“O, bethink thou then too, how, out of the germ of acquaintance,
Day by day between us mutual interest grew;
How in the depth of our hearts Friendship revealed its full power,
And how Love came last, bringing the blossoms and fruits.
Think what manifold hues and shapes, now this, now another,
Nature in quiet unfolds, and to our feelings imparts.
Now enjoy thyself fully to-day! for holy affection

Strives for its highest fruits, strives for congenial tastes,
Similar views of all things, that, through harmonious insight,
Firmly united, the pair thus the true heaven may find."

So the naturalist is prepared for the great mystery of sex, which we recognize to be neither identity nor unlikeness ; for the sexes are like stamen and pistil, different modifications of the same type, and so perpetually varying that it is impossible to make any statement of distinguishing characteristics, which will be invariably true. We trace analogous polarity even in the inorganic world ; yet although one may fancifully claim the sharp acid or the inert base as dimly representing one or the other sex, no one will seriously claim that this distinction is clearly recognizable, for the characteristic function of creation is not found. In the vegetable world, where the function is in many cases performed by the whole organism, it is difficult to trace any clear lines ; but as we find more developed specimens, the functions of parts become more distinct ; the root will no longer perform the duty of the leaf, nor the leaf that of the flower. In the more complex classes of both the vegetable and animal world, we separate the sexes broadly by the functions of reproduction ; and these are generally accompanied by secondary characteristics, in many cases so strongly marked as at once to indicate sex. But throughout these kingdoms, these secondary characteristics are very changeable. The females excel in size in the lower orders, and either sex in brilliancy and depth of color according to their sur-

roundings. Among fishes the male often builds the nest and cares for the young,—in some cases even on his own body. The female is capable of as great violence as the male, and the male, under stress of circumstances, can be as devoted and tender as the mother. In the animal world sex is less differentiated in the lowest forms of life; but the analogy does not hold in the spiritual world. In the highest types of human life, we always find a blending of the characteristics of the sexes. The illustrations are almost too numerous for selection.

Jesus, Buddha, Fénelon, Dürer, Charles Lamb,—even Michel Angelo and Dante,—blend strong feminine traits with their masculine powers; and no less in Deborah and Zenobia, in Joan of Arc, Isabella of Castile, Elizabeth Frye, Lucretia Mott, and Margaret Fuller, do we find their full womanliness reinforced by powers commonly esteemed masculine. In our own immediate circle we can easily trace out the same law; we find the boy-girl and the girl-boy in almost every family. The father of the Fair Saint “often with suppressed joy called her his misfashioned son.” Coleridge expresses the greatest scorn for the man who recognizes no sex in soul; but the difference is so subtle that it has never been well stated in words. And yet so rooted in thought is this distinction that the most religious souls have felt the necessity of recognizing it as existing within the bosom of Divinity itself. Theodore Parker would not accept Coleridge’s dictum, because he knew that

in a semi-barbarous civilization, such as ours still is, it became the pretext for a claim of sovereignty, and a power of oppression; but he felt the necessity of expressing the thought in the beautiful formula with which he was wont to begin his prayer: "O God! our father and our mother both." So the apostle of the Brahmo Somaj, — the most original and sincere religious movement of our day, though it be still vague and undefined, like its Indian predecessors, — recognizes this truth, and the Divine Maternity is one of the leading doctrines of its faith. In fact, this idea, mystically expressed in so many old mythologies, is to be the guiding star of the better civilization yet to come. George Sand says, in one of her letters, "There is but one sex"; yet in spite of her masculine name the *ewig-weibliche* is revealed not only in the motherly heart, but in the longing for human love and the infinite tenderness for humanity expressed in all her work.

How easy to accept, but how impossible to carry out, the distinction of sex in the spiritual life! In externals, in the realm of form, it is easy enough to make divisions, but in any finer sense it can only be felt, no analysis has ever been keen enough to detect it. In intellectual life this is shown by the constantly repeated occurrence of the fact that woman's mental work has been wholly accepted as that of man. Three of the greatest novelists of our time, George Sand, George Eliot, and Currer Bell, while known only by the products of their genius, found

no eyes keen enough to detect their feminine traits. Thackeray, an eminently masculine man, was sure George Eliot was of his sex. Dickens was the first to detect her secret. The acute critics of Jena declared "*Agnes von Lilien*," written by Caroline von Lengefeld, to be an anonymous work of Goethe, the master mind of Germany. In our own society Charles Egbert Craddock found no recognition as a woman till she appeared in person to her astonished publishers. Had the same outward reasons existed to lead Edgar Poe, or Charles Lamb, or Dickens, to masquerade under a woman's name, we might have found the caprice and unregulated fancy of woman in "*The Raven*," the tender sensibility and beauty of her sex in "*The Essays of Elia*," and the warm humanity, the morbid sentimentality, and the utter incapacity of woman to represent the passion of love, in "*Oliver Twist*" and "*Little Dorrit*."

Hermann Grimm, in his "*Essay on Goethe and Suleika*," tells a remarkable and pleasing instance of such an interchange of thought between Goethe and his young beloved friend, Marianne von Willemer. Grimm quoted as one of Goethe's finest poems the song,

"Ach, um deine feuchten Schwingen
West, wie sehr ich dich beneide,"

and found to his amazement that it was written by the lady; and he says, "The Divan from which this poem was taken was almost carried on like a duet between them." Yet who has distinguished

the masculine and feminine voices in the various lines ?

Open any book in physiology, and it is set down for you in broad characters, "Man is strong, reasonable, governed by his judgment; Woman is weak, emotional, swayed by her feelings." But take this formula with you as your chart in active life, and you will soon find it a delusive cheat. Witness the excitement of the Stock Exchange, and the ease with which a cyclone of confidence draws all men into its fatal grasp, or a sudden blast of doubt scatters the trust of the whole business community. Even the British House of Commons, the most carefully chosen and perhaps the sanest body of men in the world, goes into wild delirium at the defeat of a liberal ministry. After thirty years' experience in various reformatory and benevolent works where men and women took part together, I have never been able to trace a dividing line, on one side of which were the men guided by judgment, and on the other the women swayed by feeling. Goethe's men are very men, and his women always women, yet he has given us almost every shade of character in womanly form.

In "Elective Affinities," Otilie is so absolutely feminine, according to the recognized type, that she is unfit for human life; like Ophelia, she has no self-directing power, and is crushed by the world about her, as the simple pressure of the common air breaks the fragile glass, exhausted of its resisting medium. In her exquisite purity and loveliness sin cannot

touch her, yet she is incapable of virtue, and can only fly from the battle which she is unable to win. Charlotte, too, is womanly, in her calm sense, her cold unselfishness, ready to resign all her rights, all her happiness, to another's wishes, or a sense of duty ; but by that very want of self-assertion, incapable of strengthening others, and holding them to good by the bond of justice. And what has Edward of the Masculine but that self-centring thought which in its good and evil is characteristic of man ? The puzzle of the book is in his unfitness to mate with the lovely girl. Sweetness of temper, a crystalline frankness of manner, refinement of deportment, and capacity for intellectual enjoyment, make him a delightful companion. His early attraction to Charlotte is renewed when both are freed from outward constraint, and can look forward to a life of intellectual companionship and æsthetic enjoyment. How devoid of passion the relation is, becomes evident from Charlotte's having planned his marriage with Ottilie. But Charlotte is very wise in her own domain, and she knew well the danger of destroying this happy balance of friendship. Without jealousy on her part, it is his friend's introduction into the home which she opposes, not Ottilie's. She is the self-restrained, reasonable being ; he is the rash and self-willed one, who will let nothing stand between him and his desire. And it is this warmth of desire alone which redeems his nature : he does recognize that the beloved one is more than himself ;

and this alone makes it comprehensible that Goethe can recognize an eternal union for them. "So lie the lovers, sleeping side by side. Peace hovers above their resting-place. Fair angel faces gaze down upon them from the vaulted ceiling, and what a happy moment that will be when one day they wake again together." He has blindly loved, but he has recognized Love, and

" Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht *ihn* hinan."

Tasso is more poetic and lovely than Edward, but is he not equally self-centred? His life is not wrecked on sensual desire, but on the morbid sensitiveness of his soul, which never enters into the life of others, into the generous activity of the Duke, or calm wisdom of Antonio, but measures everything by himself. His love was as narrow as the learning of Faust. He had not learned the secret of relation. The Princess sees his need : —

" Willst du genau erfahren was sich ziemt
So frage nur bei edlen Frauen an." ¹

She will have him find, in a love that gives itself wholly up, the freedom that he needs. Antonio also sees his need of relation, but bids him seek it in active life :

" Der Mensch erkennt sich nur im Menschen ; nur
Das Leben lehret jedem was er sey." ²

¹ Do you wish to learn truly what is becoming,
Ask it only of noble women.

² Man knows himself only in Men ; only Life
Teaches every one what he is.

“Wilhelm Meister” is the study of the development of a human mind. What a part does Woman play in it! Goethe seems striving to find the true type of Woman to call forth the noblest in man. How loving, fresh, and natural is poor Mariana! Wilhelm’s boyish affection rashly indulged, and as he believes betrayed, is never forgotten, and only through this love is the joy of paternity known. The wise men say, “The child is thine, and in our opinion the mother was not unworthy of thee.” He never fully loves again, but is ever seeking for this lost Eden of unconscious trusting affection. His feeling for Mariana was loving, fresh, and genuine, but regardless of law and duty to others. It was like his passion for the stage: when the illusion passed, much of the truth and poetry went also, yet it left behind remorse never silenced, and regret never satisfied. How striking is the tenacity of this feeling, and the facility with which a fancied resemblance makes him believe that a fateful past can be recalled! Varying impulses play over him, yet there is an evident progress in the development of his ideal. He enjoys only superficially the toying of Phillina, sensuous and graceful as it is. She only “pressed to the door of his heart, but never entered.” He meets with fatherly care the unearthly love of Mignon; he longs to bring into his life the strong practical good-sense of Theresa; he is fascinated by the beauty of the Countess, the spiritual grace of Natalia, — but they are only shadows of things to come, which never come. He

is ever a scholar, trying all phases of life. He has never become a Man, and so has never found his true relation to Woman. Yet keeping his ideal high and pure, we still watch for his unfolding, sure that the Eternally Womanly is leading him up.

In Macaria, who appears only towards the conclusion of "*Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre*," (if there be a conclusion to a work so wandering,) we have a type of woman whose influence approaches that of "*das Ewig-Weibliche*." She has nothing of the attributes of passion, the sensuousness of sex; but by her unselfish wisdom, by the power which she has gained from suffering and thought, to look clearly upon human affairs in their largest relations, she becomes confessor and counsellor to all within her range, — always leading them to be true to themselves, while in her "light do they see light." This function belongs to the post-maternal period of life, and has ever been recognized in the Virgin becoming the Seeress. Macaria's mystical relations to heavenly bodies indicate the universal reach of her influence and central source of her inspirations.

The deep sense of the overpowering sanctity and importance of the relation of Man to Woman appears in many of the minor dramas, I might perhaps say in all of them. Goethe places it in every light. Eugenia, in "*Die Naturliche Tochter*," finds herself suddenly placed in an exceptional position. She will be raised above the multitude by rank and power. She grasps at the outward signs of it, to find it slipping from

her grasp. She has been false to the relation of the individual to the whole, and the whole, represented by the Church and the State, threatens to crush her. How can she be saved? Only by the acceptance of the marriage relation, whose sanctity and power are set forth by the simple burgher :

“ Im Hause wo der Gatte sicher waltet,
Da wohnt allein der Friede, den vergebens
In weiten du, da draussen suchen magst.” ¹

And again :

“ Als Gatte kann ich mit dem König rechnen.” ²

He too recognizes the function of the wife :

“ So fuhr ein edles Weib ihn leicht ans Ziel.
Hinauf zur höchsten Frauen kehr er sich.” ³

The marriage which can save is of the heart and soul, as the monk expresses it :

“ Den Wunsch der Liebe, die zum All das Eine,
Zum Ewigen das Gegenwärtige
Das Fluchtige zum Dauernden erhebt,
Den zu erfüllen ist sein göttlich Amt.” ⁴

¹ In the house where the husband surely directs,
There alone dwells peace, which in vain in the distance
Thou out there in the world mayst seek.

² As husband can I reckon with the king.

³ So does a noble wife easily lead him to the goal.
Up to the highest women does he strive.

⁴ The wish of Love, which raises one to the All, the present to the Eternal, the fleeting to the Everlasting, that to fulfil is her godlike office.

In the Old Harper's history we have the unconscious violation of a natural law, bringing intense tragedy, but not destruction of inward purity. In "Die Geschwister" we have the sweet regard of a sister unconsciously intensified by the difference of sex, and changed into happy love when the true relation is revealed. In "Die Wette," a pretty little comedy, the lighter characteristics of the two sexes are very pleasantly painted, and the lesson of mutual forbearance and concession gently taught.

In "Clavigo," Goethe reproduces in tragic form what was not so tragic, his love for Frederika; and here is the same thought which ever haunted him, — it is the womanly which tests man. Clavigo had failed to stand this test, had been untrue to love, and only tragedy is possible. Repentance does not help. The young, romantic heart does not accept any salving of sores, any of nature's processes of filling up chasms with new growth. Repentance cannot heal this sin, for no reparation is possible; relation is broken, faith is destroyed. Even in the moment of hoped for reunion, Marie recognizes that the old tie cannot be restored. Clavigo has passed into another mood: the opportunity is gone. Death alone, resolving the mortal back into the immortal, can restore this relation, and only when the Eternally Womanly leads him upward can he leave sin behind? So also in "Stella," Fernando has placed himself in the conflict between passionate love and recognized self-imposed duty. He has dared to play with this greatest of

human relations, and he is overwhelmed by the forces he has set in motion. For this wrong no earthly reparation is possible; property may be restored, slander may be refuted, anger may be atoned for, but this wrong cannot be righted. No unselfishness, no magnanimity, on the part of his victims, avails aught: each would sacrifice to the other, but neither can give what she cannot hold, and only Death, which dissolves all earthly ties, can make new life possible. In the novellettes in "*Wilhelm Meister*," Goethe seems to put this relation of love and marriage in every possible light: they are like the changes of a kaleidoscope, beautiful but fleeting. He seems to warn against his own besetting sin of mistaking the transient for the permanent. With this intense feeling of the mission of love and the sanctity of marriage, Goethe himself never had a full and perfect relation to a woman. The force of his being was expended in those transitory affections which, as Tennyson says,

"Are but embassies of love
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found
Empire for life."

With Frau von Stein his intellectual yearning for sympathy found full satisfaction, and his Christiane gave him for a time the homelike content, more often known in the cottager's hut than in the palace, which he had never had before. But the tragedy of his life, so often referred to as a wonderfully fortunate one, was just here. He never found the true family life, and, as husband and father, shared little of the joy

which makes so many humble lives infinitely blessed. Is it for this reason that he has never been able to paint a successful, happy love, but in the simplicity of peasant life in "*Hermann und Dorothea*," or "*Die Geschwister*," or in the dim perspective of history in *Götz* and his faithful wife?

In his own life, domestic love took on a very quiet and humble form. How his heart must have longed for this life, — he who was so sensitive to tenderness, and had such a thirst for human relation! Where shall we find a more concise and comprehensive expression of family love and life as representing the eternal mysteries of creation, than in the words of the Chorus after the birth of *Euphorien*?

"Love in human wise to bless us
In a noble pair must be ;
But divinely to possess us
It must form a precious Three."

And the all-sufficiency of Love is told in simplest words :

"All we seek has therefore found us,
I am thine and thou art mine ;
So we stand as Love hath bound us,
Other fortune we resign."

In the family is the most perfect expression of the Eternal Trinity, that great mystic doctrine running through many religions, which has been so dwarfed and narrowed by being made individual and dogmatic. But it runs as the simplest, plainest law through mechanics and chemistry, as well as biology and met-

aphysics, — the One, the Two, the resulting Third, — the union of differences in likeness producing a new creation. Goethe saw this, and if he fails to paint it fully, it is because he had not known it in his own experience.

In the First Part of "Faust," the great work in which Goethe sought to read the riddle of life, failing, as all will fail till life is fully accomplished, *das Weibliche* is the moving power. Faust is the unrelated man, devoted to knowledge only for himself. He exhausts every source of learning and thought, only to find himself wholly unfed and unsatisfied, and is ready to grant any terms on which he may secure a consciousness of life and joy. He makes the hasty compact to buy what a true faith would have given him. Woman by her beauty first calls him out of himself, and he seeks union with others. In the First Part he asks only his personal gratification, and he cannot enter into true relation with others, for he has not found himself. He is the sport of unformed desires, he does not recognize the necessity or beauty of law. The Devil is his guide, the incarnate spirit that denies. How can he lead him to true love? It is the simplest feeling of attraction to a person, not any ideal relation to the universal, which leads him on.

Heedlessly he breaks the highest law of love, which bids us seek not our own good, but the welfare of the beloved; and the human law which should represent the inward principle revenges itself upon him.

How? Not by direct infliction of outward punishment, but through the misery of the beloved one. Woman's misery, man's degradation, is the result of the broken law of love. The redeemer buys with his own sacrifice the redemption he works for others. Faust is still free to follow his selfish course; but never again unconsciously: the gadfly of conscience is aroused, which will not cease to sting him till he is elevated into true life. Yet in spite of his selfishness and sin he has loved; he has recognized that self is not all; he has known the highest human relation; he has acknowledged the existence of something not himself, yet to which he is eternally bound. So he is led out of abstraction into personality. Even through sin, still more through suffering, he has learned the lesson of relation to others, which in the Second Part is to be worked out, not in the simplicity of individual love, but on the broad scale of Humanity. Through all the wild masquerading of its many scenes, we find him learning this lesson. He seeks to become a benefactor to mankind, but at first how wildly, — with the help of the Devil! The scheme of spreading universal happiness by producing an abundance of paper money, devised by Mephistopheles and since followed by his successors, while it is undoubtedly a satire on South Sea and other wild financial schemes, may also fitly represent that selfish benevolence which finds pleasure in beholding the transient enjoyment of those around us, whether it is based on good or evil. The women see the char-

latanry of the great mask, and mock at the false magician who is—nothing; not even feeling when one pinches him. Here in homely form is a hint of the quality of Woman which is expressed in the last line. The Womanly tests life by a more delicate analysis than masculine logic supplies. Woman considers things in their relations. This is the quality of judgment which we recognize as specially womanly, and which has been manifested on a large scale by queens and empresses, as in every-day life in the management of a household and the control of children.

The mystical charm with which Goethe loved to surround the feminine, while keeping its peculiar function ever in mind, is shown by his introduction of the Mothers in "*Faust*." This passage has been the despair of commentators. An obscure phrase in Plutarch, calling the Goddesses "the Mothers," seems to have excited his imagination, and he uses this term as the most powerful and suggestive of names, without feeling called upon to offer any explanation of it. Yet it has a power for Faust, and a terror even for Mephistopheles, who may well feel it to be utterly outside of his realm. The various metaphysical analyses of this phrase seem very wide of the mark; it is the all-including comprehensiveness of the expression which gives it a charm and terror. As the little child believes that the mother can answer all questions and satisfy all wants, is it strange that man should come back to a longing for the motherly

power? Goethe has said, "Express thyself, and 't will a riddle be," — this simplest of all words is full of mystery and terror. Why should Faust be appalled at their very name? What is the meaning of the key which is to lead him to them? Is the key the childlike trust which Faust has lost, and which would make motherhood an attraction, and not a terror? When we can carry our desires into the presence of the Divine Motherhood, they must have become righteous and holy. Faust goes to the mothers to grant the fulfilment of his longing for beauty and love.

Here his escape from the power of Mephistopheles seems to begin. It has already become another love than that to which Mephistopheles first led him. It is not he in his individual being who is wedded to a beautiful maiden. It is the spirit of his country, German thought, which seeks after Greek beauty, and from this union is born the modern poet. This love does not become tragic in its results, like his attraction to Margaret; it is indeed only an image of love, but it truly represents it as not for themselves alone, but for the whole of Humanity.

If we take Helena in the literary sense for Classic culture, while Faust represents the German, may not the appeal to the Mothers represent that return to the old primitive thought, the universal source, which always accompanies every new radical movement in thought? We must relate our special movement to the universal, and the new must strike its roots deep

into the old. It seems hopeless to attempt to fathom the precise meaning with which Goethe uses this phrase, yet it is certain that it meant a great deal to him, and that when interpreted by his own voice and manner it strongly impressed others. Eckermann writes : —

“To-day, as a supplement to the dinner, Goethe gave me a great enjoyment by reading to me the scene where Faust goes to the Mothers. The new, unsuspected character of the subject, together with the tone and manner in which Goethe recited the scene, took hold of me with wonderful power, so that I found myself at once in the condition of Faust, who feels a shudder creep over him when Mephistopheles makes the communication. I had heard and clearly comprehended the description, but so much of it remained enigmatical to me that I felt myself forced to beg Goethe to enlighten me a little. He however, according to his usual habit, assumed a mysterious air, looking at me with wide-open eyes, and repeating the words, —

‘The Mothers ! Mothers ! It sounds so strange.’ ”

This Second Part of “Faust” seems at first like a wild chaos. In it are the riches of a hundred dramas, but it is not crystallized into clearness and symmetry. It was Goethe’s study of life, and he could not marshal it all into line, as a lesser man might do his lesser riches. Yet there is one simple thought running through it all, and, as he expresses it in the last grand verse, we see it is the plainest religious truth, — that which enters into every faith, which underlies the beautiful in art, the ideal in

philosophy, the essence of morality, the meaning of life. It is the sense of the relation of the individual to the universal. We never think, never can think, of the feminine alone. It is not what separates her from others, but what gives the power of union, which makes her feminine, and so creative. And the masculine knows itself only in its relation to the feminine. So it is that the eternally feminine "draws us by sweet leadings" of beauty to love, to union, to new creation. But in using these words, we must remember that these human forms which we live among, and which flit past us like the changing phantoms in Goethe's half-mocking drama, are but shadows and types. Sex, as we see it gradually evolved out of the chemical relations of the mineral world, the fertilization of flowers, the wooing of the oriole and the bobolink in the spring-time, the chivalry of the cock, and the fierce jealousy of the tiger, to its beautiful outcome in the highest human relation, which is the never-wearying theme of romance and poetry, is a shadowing forth of the duality in the original spirit out of which comes the creative energy manifested in the universe. As we have seen, this double strand is woven in and out throughout nature, and in trying to trace it we are constantly bewildered by finding its place and attitude changing. We cry, "Lo here! and, Lo there!" but like the kingdom of God, it is within us and found everywhere. If it represents duality, it equally represents unity and universality, and we may as well

divide the rainbow by arbitrary lines, as seek to put asunder those differing phases of His creative agency which God has so closely joined together. Yet the difference of sexes is as expressive and necessary as their unity, and their functions cannot be confounded. Mythology has made woman the representative of attraction to evil, because it had not learned that life is good ; but Goethe's inspired Muse, who knew that secret, and held the Faust to be redeemed who had at last found it good, taught that woman leads indeed through varied and dangerous paths, but still leads to life ; and it is a grand acceptance of life, and its experience and its teachings, which bids him close his great drama with a recognition of this truth, — *Das Ewig Weibliche zieht uns hinan.*

NOTE.

As the various reports of the School have made it apparent that the doctrine of this lecture was misunderstood, I have added the following Synopsis :—

There is, even in the Divine Nature, as we are forced to conceive it, a polarity, or power of differentiation which is eternal, — *ewig*.

This polarity running through all nature, even the inanimate and inorganic, appears as sex, — suggested in the vegetable kingdom, and slowly evolved in the

animal world, taking its most complete form in the Human Being.

Its distinctive characteristics appear as impulse and attraction. Its function is creation, and while the masculine is stimulating and life-giving, the feminine is receptive and productive.

This central difference, complicated with all the circumstances of existence, produces many secondary characteristics illustrative of sex ; but these secondary characteristics are in the process of evolution unstable and interchangeable. These principles, though separated in our ultimate thought, are constantly blended in manifestation. Nature works to produce embryo wholes, and not ever-widening monstrosities. Hence, while our ideal of *das mannliche* and *das weibliche* may be sharply defined as force and attraction, or centrifugal and centripetal, or Justice and Mercy, its manifestation in persons is rarely distinct ; but by the double descent the two are blended in every individual, and in the highest natures the most perfectly.

The office of mortal life is to develop the spiritual nature by the constant manifestation, action, and reaction of these principles on each other, so as to attain the widest universality, and the most perfect unity. They play an equal part in the great drama of Life ; but as the feminine represents attraction, this is the leading principle which draws us upward and on.

IX.

THE ELECTIVE AFFINITIES.

BY S. H. EMERY, JR.

THIS special creation of the great artist, whose genius and work are the principal theme of this session of the Summer School of Philosophy, belongs to that particular form of art which is named "The Novel." Perhaps it is the only work of our author which can properly be so classified. Goethe himself seems to have been in doubt about the appropriateness of the title to this work, for he is reported by Eckermann as saying, with reference to the sketch of the Child and the Lion, called "A Tale" in Dr. Hedge's edition of Goethe's Works:—

"I'll tell you what, we will call it 'The Novel'; for what is a novel but a peculiar and as yet unheard-of event? This is the proper meaning of this name; and much which in Germany passes as a novel is no novel at all, but a mere narrative, or whatever else you like to call it. In that original sense of an unheard-of event, even the 'Elective Affinities' may be called a novel."

Goethe's definition of the novel does not distinguish it from the romance, nor from short tales and

sketches, such as the work the name for which he was considering. A brief consideration of the place of the novel in the system of art is not impertinent here.

The novel, as a work of art, belongs to the domain of Poetry, and therefore, so far as the material it uses is concerned, is capable of the most complete expression of the highest ideal in art. It has the external characteristics of the prose form, but is essentially poetic. Goethe says that the "Elective Affinities" is a poetic production. The fundamental art element in poetry is not the rhyme, the rhythm, or the harmony of the verse, but the image. The true is therein represented in an image; not an actually existent, external, spatial image, but an internal form of the imagination,— "images preserved in the spirit and recalled by it"; this makes the presentation artistic. Art manifests the whole in the part. This fundamental element of art is the basis of the novel in point of form.

In point of content, it belongs to that phase of art which is called by Hegel "Romantic Art." It portrays the individual working out the problem of his spiritual development, — either, on the one side, subjective passions, caprices, desires, even good but mistaken intentions, on the other side the universal and eternal verities, into harmony with which the individual must come; or, with equal validity, on the one side the universal and eternal as realized in the individual spirit, on the other side, the exter-

nally capricious and accidental: but in either case it portrays a struggle for spiritual harmony.

The novel proper is of modern English origin, dating from about the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is distinguished from the romance, which is a narrative of wonders, strange, improbable events; while the novel accommodates itself, for the most part, to ordinary society and the ordinary course of human affairs, seeking to draw attention to, and excite our interest in, the collisions of the subjective with the objective. A writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* mentions as a fact that the rise of the novel is coincident with the decline of the drama, and attributes both to the change in the spirit of the age. Goethe in "*Meister*" expresses the true distinction between the novel and the drama in point of content and method. He says:—

"In the novel as well as in the drama, it is human nature and human action that we see. . . . But in the novel it is chiefly *sentiments* and *events* that are exhibited; in the drama it is *character* and *deeds*. The novel must go slowly forward, and the sentiments of the hero, by one means or another, must restrain the tendency of the whole to unfold itself and to conclude. The drama, on the other hand, must hasten, and the character of the hero must press forward to the end; it does not restrain, but is restrained."

There can be no doubt that for the modern English mind the novel is a more effective form of art than the drama; perhaps because the novel, as being

nearer to the verge of art, is better adapted to a prosaic age and nation. The wider range of incident and more minute analysis of character are more in accordance with the disposition and taste of a highly civilized people, than the strong situations and powerful effects which are necessary to the drama. The picture of life presented is also more true to the present reality, and therefore takes hold of the interest more readily.

The "Elective Affinities" has then a special interest, as an example of a form of art more distinctively peculiar than any other to our time, and to the English consciousness. I have said, also, that it is perhaps the only work of our author which is, strictly speaking, a novel, as we ordinarily understand the term. The novel proper falls between the romance and the disquisition, and the "Elective Affinities" seems to occupy this middle ground more consistently than any other work of Goethe. It has variety of place, time, action, and persons, to distinguish it from a sketch or tale; it presents a picture of life, which seems true to the ordinary conditions of the place and time wherein the scene is laid; its incidents are for the most part commonplace, rather than romantic, in the sense of startling, wonderful, unreal; and its story does not impress the reader as a merely artificial and external thread, on which the author has strung disquisitions upon every imaginable subject. On the contrary the story furnishes, as in a novel it should, the necessary field for the col-

lisions sought to be portrayed. A critic has said of Goethe's novels generally : —

“ They are ingenious speculations on painting, agriculture, landscape-gardening, etc., connected by a thread of mystical narrative, and introducing us to a set of beings without the least trace of reality about them, who all appear to be playing some theatrical part in a dreamy representation of life, which seems to have no intelligible object.”

But this criticism is entirely inappropriate to the “*Elective Affinities*,” though that has episodical passages, which might be called “ingenious speculations” on gardening, architecture, painting, chemistry, and other subjects; and it doubtless in a deep way justifies Goethe's statement that it is a novel because it is a before unheard-of event. The critic proceeds to say : —

“ A novel which does not explain its purpose without a commentary seems to violate the essential laws of such compositions; but a novel in regard to the object of which no two commentators agree, is an anomaly in literature.”

If this criticism were to be accepted as final, it would dispose of the claim of the “*Elective Affinities*” to be considered a novel, for there has certainly been a wide disagreement among the commentators as to its purpose; but it very naturally occurs to one that this result may rather be the fault of the commentators than of the novel. It must have been surprising to

Goethe, for he seems to have doubted whether he had not made his meaning too plain, to the detriment of his art. Soret reports him as saying, —

“The only production of greater extent, in which I am conscious of having labored to set forth a pervading idea is probably my ‘*Elective Affinities*.’ This novel has thus become comprehensible to the understanding; but I will not say that it is therefore better. I am rather of the opinion, that the more incommensurable and the more incomprehensible to the understanding a poetic production is, so much the better it is.”

You will notice that Goethe’s conception of the proper aim of the artist in this regard differs fundamentally from that of his critic; hence, it is not surprising that the critic should not have been pleased with the results.

With these preliminary general observations we will proceed to an examination of the “sentiments and events” which Goethe has portrayed in the “*Elective Affinities*,” reserving our consideration of the special content of this novel for the conclusion. We have it on the authority of Goethe, that the novel was written with a conscious pervading purpose, and we must try to ascertain what the purpose was, or better, perhaps, what has really been done; for the purpose in and of itself might be accidental and temporary.

The title “*Elective Affinities*” Goethe justifies, early in the work, in a conversation between Edward,

Charlotte, and the Captain, in the course of which it is explained that "elective affinity" is the technical scientific term applied to those instances of chemical action where, on the presentation to a compound substance of a third, one of the elements of the compound will leave its combination and combine with the third, thus exhibiting a natural election between the two possible combinations. The most important and remarkable cases of this action are where the separation and uniting are both double; that is, where two compounds, on being brought together, each divide and reunite with change of partners. This is chemically analogous to what sometimes happens in human society, when the casual introduction of a third person utterly destroys a connection, apparently indissoluble, between two, through presenting opportunity for a new and naturally more urgent combination; but Charlotte warns us that man is placed many steps above chemical elements, and that he will do well to consider carefully the validity of the analogy as applied to himself. The incidents of the novel exhibit the workings of a double elective affinity in the human sphere: hence the name. The scene of the story is the estate of a German nobleman, and the time probably contemporaneous with the writing. Neither year nor real location is anywhere mentioned.

Solger wrote, in a letter to Tieck, an elaborate criticism of the "Elective Affinities," which interested and pleased Goethe, who says, "It would not be easy to say anything better about that novel." In the

course of this critical survey Solger said, "The facts of the 'Elective Affinities' had their germ in the nature of all the characters." We will therefore consider the principal characters before examining the incidents. They interest us, not only in themselves, but as general types.

Edward was the only, and consequently spoiled, child of wealthy parents, from whom large possessions had descended to him. In early life he had met and loved Charlotte, who loved him. He married, however, through the persuasion of his parents and while dissatisfied with Charlotte's reserve, a wealthy lady far older than himself, who petted and indulged him in every way, and, dying, left him free, in the prime of life, to return to Charlotte, whom he married; and he is introduced at the beginning of the story as living with Charlotte alone, soon after their marriage, at his ancestral castle. He is apparently "equal to all contingencies and changes, with desires never excessive, but multiple and various; free-hearted, generous, brave, at times even noble"; he has had large experience of life, at court, in the army, and in travelling, but has never been thwarted, and has not learned self-restraint. His return to Charlotte was due to a sort of romantic remembrance of their early love, and to a desire to settle down quietly to a delicious leisure with a pleasant companion, rather than to a strong, absorbing passion. He is of good disposition, and has not fallen into vices, but he has little constancy or perseverance; even his

flute-playing is not good, because, although he would for a little while prosecute it with industry, he would soon tire of the effort. His favorite method of decision as to courses of action, where decision is difficult, is to submit the matter to chance. He is amiable and considerate, but impulsive, ardent, and youthful; without substantial character, settled convictions, or high purposes. He is in danger of becoming a drunkard when things go against him. He has never learned to forego his immediate desire, is vehement and obstinate, and thinks life valueless unless he can have what, at the moment, seems to him a necessity of his nature. Hence, he is essentially extravagant, sacrificing always the distant to the near. He prefers death to disappointment in love. Goethe says, speaking of Solger's criticism of Edward:—

“I do not quarrel with him because he cannot endure Edward. I myself cannot endure him, but was obliged to make him such a man in order to bring out my fact. He is, besides, very true to nature; for you find many people in the higher ranks with whom, quite like him, obstinacy takes the place of character.”

Charlotte is a quite opposite character. She is a prudent, wise, fore-looking person. Her instincts are conservative and tenacious of institutional requirements, and she recognizes that the family is woman's special institution. She is domestic, careful, and economical; she keeps the accounts and pays the bills. Perhaps she is more excitable and quicker to feel

even than Edward, but with power of self-restraint, and always ready to subordinate her feelings to her judgment. She does not willingly allow herself to be surprised into emotion. With tact and self-possession to see and do the right thing in any emergency she unites self-sacrifice, so that she is willing to do what she believes to be right, at whatever cost to herself; with fortitude also, so that she can insist upon the present suffering of those she loves, for their ultimate best good, even in spite of their shrinking, added to the pain of her own heart. She is a constant and reserved, not a passionate and effusive, lover. One can believe that when she gave her hand, after Edward's first marriage, without any special motive, to an excellent man, whom she could respect if she could not love, she did it, not because she had forgotten Edward, but because she thought it unwise to sacrifice her life to a hopeless passion. It would seem that she should have been a devoted mother, yet she is not; and possibly Goethe means thereby to intimate that maternal love and devotion are dependent upon supreme love for the father, which was lacking in Charlotte's case. However this may be, Charlotte is a conscientious mother, but not passionately fond of her children. Her chief weakness lies in allowing herself to be over-persuaded against her instincts and judgment. When Edward returned to her, and urged marriage, she hesitated: she felt that it was not prudent; that during the interval of their separation she had outgrown him,

though they were of about the same age, and that the love of their youth had changed to friendship; yet his urgent solicitation overcame her doubts. So too when Edward impulsively proposed the introduction of a third person into their home, she said, "My feeling is against this plan; I have an instinct which tells me no good will come of it"; yet she yielded. From these two concessions arise the complications of the story.

The Captain is a man of affairs, reserved, laconic, sedate, accomplished, and self-restrained. Up to the time when Edward invites him to the castle, he has found no situation in life which he considers worthy of his own ability and accomplishments; and although he is not wealthy, finding strict economy and occasional assistance from his friend Edward necessary to the maintenance of his accustomed style of living, he will not accept offered positions which seem to him not suitable to enlist all his energies, in directions where he can accomplish substantial, permanent benefit to the world. He is orderly, methodical, industrious, persistent, laborious, tireless, and conscientious in his work; never willing to leave undone what he has begun, or to surrender a position into incompetent hands,—despising a man who wishes to insure that he shall be appreciated and missed through the failure of those who have displaced him. His passions are substantially under his control, and we are not surprised to find him urging upon Edward the claims of institutions and society as paramount

to individual inclination, by all the arguments of a mature, self-poised man of the world, though success would destroy the Captain's own hopes.

Ottilie is the most interesting and the most attractive character in the novel. She is introduced to us as a young girl at school, and Goethe describes her character as it appears to the Mother Superior, who does *not* love her, and to the Assistant, who does. She is an orphan, has been adopted by Charlotte, who is her aunt and was her mother's most intimate friend, and has been placed at the school with Luciana, the daughter of Charlotte. The Lady Superior says of Ottilie, "She is always unassuming, always ready to oblige others ; but it is not pleasant to see her so timid, so almost servile." She thinks her too abstemious as to personal comfort and adornment, in her eating, drinking, and dressing ; but says, "She keeps her things very nice and clean." The Lady Superior's suggestion as to Ottilie's habit of abstinence from proper food is obviously intended to prevent the misapprehension that Ottilie, at the crisis of her life, wilfully committed suicide by starvation.

At the school examination Ottilie utterly fails, and the Assistant tells us why. She is very slow to learn, and cannot learn at all by rote. Everything must come to her by slow, successive steps, and with the logical connection perfectly explicit and fully seized. She learns like one who is to educate, and her progress, though slow, is sure. But brilliancy at an

examination is not possible to her. She is inevitably behind her companions in superficial acquisition, and besides, when she is asked a question about what she *does* know, she seems to know nothing; even her handwriting exhibits this slowness and stiffness, though it is not without character. The Assistant excuses the examiners for their lack of appreciation of Ottilie, for it is their function to appraise accomplishments, not capabilities; yet he is sure that she has been born for the good and happiness of others, and assuredly also for her own, and that the fruits of her labors will develop themselves sooner or later into a beautiful life.

Goethe brings the saintliness of Ottilie into prominence by the Assistant's description of a saintly gesture, which is habitual to her; and he tells us that when, in the Young Architect's tableau, she appeared as the Mother of God, "she excelled all that any painter has represented." We find that Ottilie is beautiful in person, affectionate, and appreciative; that she has that exceedingly agreeable faculty of entertaining one by her listening; that in the domestic sphere she is very quick to learn and very skilful in directive power, knowing how to direct, and able also to set right herself anything undone or wrongly done; very methodical she is too, dividing her day and assigning to each division its own labors. The whole management of the household is soon given up to her; even Charlotte's child is her especial care. She is a delightful companion for both women and men, and

at Charlotte's request makes for herself most tasteful dresses. Goethe says she becomes thus more and more a delight to all who behold her, for human beauty appeals both to the outward and to the inward sense, and "whoever looks upon it is charmed against the breath of evil and feels in harmony with himself and with the world." She is exceedingly and increasingly anxious to be of service,—half a word is enough for her here; "with her calm attentiveness, and her easy, unexcited activity, she is always the same; sitting, rising up, going, coming, fetching, carrying, returning to her place again, all in the most perfect repose," — constant change, constant agreeable movement, yet always a calm placidity. Her desire to serve is excessive and needs restraint, appearing servile to one not appreciating its motive, as it did to the Lady Superior. She alone, of all the characters, unless perhaps the Young Architect, seems to have religious sentiment; she feels the pervading presence of God, sees His hand in her afflictions, and asks His aid and comfort. Her artistic talent is quite remarkable, though it does not rise to genius. She has the clairvoyant temperament, can see her lover by second-sight, and feels buried treasures. She is so attractive to men that in any company she is the centre of attraction. The Captain, the Count, and the Baron all seek her society, and the Assistant and the Young Architect, besides Edward, are her lovers. Yet their love is unsought, and is a surprise to her. There is no trace of the coquette in her character. Goethe

indicates the universality of her fascination by making her so attractive to such different men.

Ottilie's love is so unselfish that she could surrender Edward willingly, if his best good demanded the sacrifice, while Edward's love is intensely selfish. It seems as if Goethe gave to Ottilie every characteristic of body, mind, and spirit which he considered desirable in a woman. When Ottilie died, all the people followed, or rather crowded around, her bier; men, women, boys, and especially the girls who had been her pupils, — there was not one among them all unmoved. Even her lifeless body had the saintly virtue of healing, so that he who touched it was restored to health, and great crowds made pilgrimages to her tomb as to the shrine of a saint.

Lewes says of Ottilie's Diary, that it gives us, instead of the impassioned feelings of a young girl, the thoughts of an old man. Goethe himself says that the larger proportion of the sentences could not have arisen from her own reflection, but must have been copied from something which took her fancy. There are parts of the Diary, however, which are evidently intended as revelations of Ottilie's own feelings, and these exhibit the patient waiting which is characteristic of her. There are no passionate longings for immediate possession of her lover; she is content to look forward to lying side by side with him in the grave. The impetuous, vehement Bettine writes to Goethe, in regard to Ottilie: "It is not maidenly for her to leave her lover, and not to wait from him the

unfolding of her fate ; it is not womanly that she does not consider his fate alone." It were evident enough without this criticism that Bettine is not the original of Ottilie. It lies in Ottilie's nature that her very innocence should expose her to the fatal entanglement of a love impossible of realization on earth. With her deep, undemonstrative nature, her surrender to the guidance of others, her desire to do right, her little self-reliance, but great capacity silently to endure, she is sure, if she love unwisely, to die for love. One feels her fascination, and can pardon her mistake.

The four characters already considered are the principal persons of the story ; their sentiments are the theme, and the events are important only as they affect these persons. The other characters, though subordinate, are very interesting, and worthy of serious study, but we must at this time dismiss them hurriedly.

Mittler is a unique creation, and one would suppose hardly to be met with in real life ; yet Goethe says of this character, that "a person whom he had never seen or known in his life had supposed the character of Mittler to be meant for himself." He adds, "There must be some truth in this character, and it must have existed more than once in the world." He is, as his name indicates, a mediator, (his only business in life being to settle disputes,) and he serves two important purposes. Into his mouth Goethe puts his own views of the marriage relation,

in some of its aspects, and, through Mittler's inability to give any real assistance when it is most needed, Goethe exhibits the insufficiency of external mediation for the solution of internal problems.

The Assistant is a laborious, pains-taking teacher, who loves Ottilie, not with vehement passion, but with deep-seated regard, based on association and careful observation of her character. He thinks she would make an excellent teacher's wife. He can wait however, and does wait forever, without apparently being much the worse for it. He would undoubtedly have made Ottilie a good husband, but would hardly have satisfied any heart-hunger. His great gift is to talk well, and to treat in his conversation of men and human relations, particularly in reference to the cultivation of young people. He is absorbed in his vocation, and Goethe attributes to him many profound observations on teaching.

The Young Architect, though a subordinate character in the incidents of the story, is placed by Solger "*high above all* ; because while all the other persons of the novel show themselves loving and weak, he alone remains strong and free ; and the beauty of his nature consists not so much in this, that he *does* not fall into the errors of the other characters, but in this, that the poet has made him so noble that he cannot fall into them." Goethe, commenting on this, says to Eckermann, "that is really very fine" ; and Eckermann responds, "I have felt the importance and amiability of the Architect's character ; but I

never remarked that he was so very excellent, just because by his very nature he could not fall into those bewilderments of love." To which Goethe replies, "No wonder, for I myself never thought of it when I was creating him. Yet Solger is right; this certainly is his character." So Goethe bears testimony to that unconscious element in the creative activity of the artist by which he "buildded better than he knew." It is true, therefore, that it is much wiser to seek the content of the created work of art in the work itself, than to search the memoirs of the artist for his purpose, though that may have human interest also. It is the function of the Young Architect to *restore*. He has a great collection of imitations of and designs from old monuments and vases, and of outlines and figures traced from original ancient pictures. The character of the collection indicates that purity, reverence, tranquillity, are the prominent characteristics of the collector. The fantastic and sentimental in art are not in accordance with his taste, but he delights in reproducing the placid, innocent, satisfied, pious happiness of the saints. In this spirit he restores the church and chapel; but as he is only a dilettante in painting, he makes no attempt at originality, and he is so susceptible to the influence of his companionship with Ottilie, that all the faces he paints resemble her. To him Ottilie is the saint; in her the right thing is innate. His devotion is so deep and true, that one feels his love ought to have been requited. Certainly, of Ottilie's lovers he was far the most worthy of her

love. But Solger's estimate of his nobility, which protects him from the errors of the other characters, seems justified. When his work is done, he departs, lingering to be sure till he forces himself away, feeling that he can endure his disappointment better at a distance; yet he goes with only a half-melancholy feeling, bravely resolving, one can believe, to conquer what cannot be satisfied. He returns to stand, "in the vigor of youth and grace, with his arms drooping and his hands clasped piteously together, motionless, with head and eye inclined over Otilie's inanimate body," and to think of "the rare, sweet, lovely virtues whose peaceful workings the thirsty world had welcomed, while it had them, with gladness and joy, and now was sorrowing for them with unavailing desire"; but as he sees "his beautiful friend floating before him in the new life of a higher world," his tears cease flowing, his sorrow grows lighter, and, reverentially taking his leave of Otilie, he rides away into the night, we hope, consoled.

Luciana, the daughter of Charlotte and the excellent man whom she "respected, if she did not love," is a foil to Otilie. Otilie is modest, retiring, unassuming, undemonstrative, considerate, and helpful. Luciana is bold, brilliant, superficial, pushing, utterly reckless of the feelings of others, utilizing all persons and things for the gratification of her caprices, born to command, but not to command gracefully. Wherever Luciana comes, she turns everything topsy-turvy; yet notwithstanding the arbitrariness of her caprices,

she has a certain skill for winning people to herself when she thinks it worth while, by making each believe himself the most favored by her; and she has many admirers, even adorers. She has no success with the Young Architect, however. She is satirical, wilful, and thoroughly selfish, though with occasional capriciously benevolent impulses; and her feelings toward Ottilie have a genuine bitterness. Luciana is an essentially unlovely and distasteful character, even though the Lady Superior regards her as a little divinity, and one wonders how the combination of Charlotte and the excellent man produced such result; yet Charlotte with a parent's hope believes that the discipline of life may make her amiable and charming.

Nanny interests us as enabling the author to exhibit the attractiveness of Ottilie in the relation of mistress and servant. Nanny is a wild, wayward, lively little village girl, who seems to have no capacity for work at home, but devotes herself body and soul to Ottilie, and in her service is active, cheerful, never-tiring. Nanny's devotion does not always restrain her covetousness and greediness; but she is driven distracted by the thought that she had killed her mistress by concealing the fact that, at Ottilie's command, she had eaten the food prepared for Ottilie, remembering with remorse that she had enjoyed the eating. The touch of Ottilie's lifeless hand worked a miracle in Nanny's soul, as well as on her broken body; for we find her, after, addressing the Young Architect in his sorrow with such truthfulness and

power, such kindness and such confidence, as to astonish and comfort him.

The Count and Baroness are distinctively "society people," and while recognizing the validity of marriage, and respecting it in their own case as a social and legal requirement, they have no deep conviction of its rationality. Curiously enough, Goethe makes them instruments to separate the Captain from Charlotte, and Ottilie from Edward, though the latter scheme does not work out as the Baroness intended.

The Earl and his friend have only an episodic connection with the story; but here, as always, the more carefully we examine the episode, the more thoroughly we feel its real artistic connection with the main work.

We will next examine the events in which these characters are involved, confining ourselves, however, for the sake of brevity, to the two principal threads. The story opens with a picture of domestic contentment. Charlotte and Edward, having been married a few months, have settled down to a country life by themselves, in a beautiful home, with ample wealth, spending their days industriously in the improvement of the estate, and their evenings in pleasant conversation, writing, reading, playing duets for flute and piano, and arranging and completing Edward's old journal, — perfect domestic tranquillity. But even Adam and Eve, who had had no experience of anything else, and had no social world over

against them, found a garden life irksome; while these persons have spent their youth at court, have been accustomed to gay society, have many ties which connect them with the social world, and are still in the prime of life. They have experienced also a youthful, mutual attachment; each has made a marriage of convenience, and they have now united themselves in a marriage of friendship. From what we have seen of the two characters, we know that Charlotte could spend her life contentedly under her present circumstances, but that Edward will soon become discontented, will desire a change, and will be entirely carried away by the first strong passion which change of circumstances may give occasion to. This tranquil life is only the point of departure, therefore Goethe provides for its destruction in the very first chapter; indeed, Edward has the invitation to the Captain in mind as he lays down his gardening tools in the opening paragraph. Edward proposes inviting their old friend the Captain to visit them. Charlotte opposes to his excellent practical reasons for the change her feeling that the introduction of a third person will break up their scheme of life disastrously. She feels, what Edward does not, that a marriage of friendship is not secure, and is sure that the intervention of a third person is a matter of very great moment. However, she yields at last to Edward's vehemence and obstinacy, concealed by the warmth and sweetness with which he urges his scheme, and is even finally over-persuaded by him into solving her difficulty

about Otilie by sending for her as well. Edward's crowning argument is, that it would be selfish in them to decline to help those who have the closest claim upon their affection, lest some danger should come to themselves. And so the foundation is laid for the collisions of the story. We notice, however, that Edward does not intend any harm; he has seen Otilie, but has hardly noticed her, and wonders that Charlotte can think her particularly attractive.

The limits of a single paper will not permit me to stay upon the details of the story. I must content myself with the slightest outline, assuming that you are already familiar with the details, or will become so if your interest is excited. The first part of the work is devoted to portraying with consummate art the rise and development of the passion of love between Edward and Otilie, the Captain and Charlotte. Love scenes, of the ordinary English novel variety, are scarcely to be found at all in this novel. They are managed with great delicacy for the most part, and the growth of passion is indicated mainly by slight artistic touches, rather than by broad delineation. In each of the personages the sentiment takes form and is dealt with as the character of the individual determines. Edward begins to fall in love with Otilie the first evening after her arrival, and yields himself wholly to his passion, with utter disregard of every other consideration; yet even he, as a lover, finds himself in his beloved, and can make sacrifices for her. Otilie's love is as pure and innocent as the

unfortunate circumstances will permit. She began to love Edward (Charlotte contriving to bring them together) before his marriage to Charlotte; but Edward, with characteristic obstinacy and singleness of view, was at that time so intent upon securing Charlotte that he did not notice Ottilie. So it was his own wilfulness, not an external fate, which placed the insuperable barrier between them. Ottilie is persuaded by Edward that Charlotte desires a separation that she may marry the Captain, and, accustomed to rely upon the judgment of others, does not reflect farther, but allows her whole soul to become devoted to her love. Goethe says that, "led by the sense of her own innocence along the road to the happiness for which she longed, she only lived for Edward; and, strengthened by her love for him in all good, more light and happy in her work for his sake, and more frank and open toward others, she found herself in a heaven upon earth." Our author very carefully preserves Ottilie from any wilful, deliberate transgression of the laws of God or man.

Charlotte and the Captain are drawn together by similarity of tastes and occupation, and by mutual respect and esteem. Between them there is at no time violent passion, but only sincere regard. They co-operate in renunciation and separation, and each strives heartily to reinstate the divided family; but Edward's headlong impetuosity renders all their efforts futile. He insists upon a separation from Charlotte, refuses to allow Ottilie to be sent away, abandons his

home ; and when he learns that Charlotte is about to become a mother, instead of being recalled to duty and family, he is overcome by despair, joins the army, and, recklessly fighting, seeks to solve by death the difficulties of his situation, or to find in his escape an assurance that fate favors his love. Charlotte recovers her spirits and cheerfulness, and does all she can to help Ottilie, providing full employment for her, and advising her wisely and considerately. Ottilie enters as best she may into the various activities suggested by Charlotte, teaching the village girls, and superintending the house and gardens ; but does not succeed in overcoming her passion. "She had first found in Edward what life and happiness meant, and in her present position she feels an infinite and dreary chasm of which before she could have formed no conception." So, at the end of the first part of the story, all the tranquillity is destroyed, the family is divided, and the chief personages are out of true relation to each other and to the world. Goethe's universal panacea, activity and diversion, seems inadequate here. In the second part a solution is sought. We shall see how it is effected.

We will pass over the discussion about burial-places, which would alone furnish suggestion for an entire essay, as well as also the restoration of the chapel, the social whirlpool stirred up by Luciana, and other very important episodes, which have not however essential bearing upon the principal content of the story. The evident devotion of the Young

Architect, the prudent desire of the Assistant, and the round of gay entertainments devised by Luciana, make no change in Ottilie's absorbing passion. The Assistant finds her, "in respect of a freer carriage, of an easier manner of speaking, of a higher insight into the things of the world, altered much for the better." But "it seemed to her as if nothing in the world were disconnected, so long as she thought of the one person whom she loved; and she could not conceive how, without him, anything could be connected at all." She is docile, and does her part everywhere, but without essential change. The child of Charlotte and Edward, the heir to the estate, is born, and Ottilie, devoting herself to it for Edward's sake, begins to realize the ethical requirements of the family. She sees how desirable and necessary it is that the child should grow up under the eyes of the father and mother, "and renew and strengthen the union between them." It becomes clear to her that her love, if it would perfect itself, must become wholly unselfish; and there are moments in which she believes that she has already attained this elevation, and thinks herself able to resign Edward and never see him again, if she can only know that he is happy: "the one only determination she forms for herself is never to belong to another." Charlotte has so far succeeded in her renunciation that she begins to plan the marriage of the Captain with Ottilie. So it seems as if the family were to triumph, and all were to be set right by the coming of the child upon the scene.

But Edward, who has survived the perils of the war, reappears, and neither his own sense of duty nor the arguments of the Captain (now the Major) restrain him. He listens to what the Major says about his duty to his wife, to his family, to his own position, and to the world, but they are all naught to his love. He is still determined upon separation from Charlotte. He says fate has brought them into their present situation, and the only solution is by a reconstruction of their relations. He will not quite promise to reconsider, even if it can be shown that Ottilie can be happy without him; but no other consideration will have any effect upon him. The most the Major can secure is a slight delay, and he is finally prevailed upon to assent to Edward's plan. Edward goes to Ottilie, tells her that the Major has undertaken to persuade Charlotte, and begs and implores her acquiescence, but is met by a reference to the child, and a firm determination to abide Charlotte's decision, though he succeeds in getting fresh assurance of her love.

Here interposes an accident which destroys all hope of solution by means of the child. Goethe makes the agitation produced in Ottilie by Edward's impetuosity cause the child's death. Charlotte sees in this the determination of destiny, and consents to the separation. She believes that the good of Edward and Ottilie requires the sacrifice at her hands. To the Major's urging of his own suit, she says, "Do not ask me now! I will tell you another time. We have

not deserved to be miserable ; but neither can we say we have deserved to be happy together." The Major and Edward are both inclined to regard the death of the child as "a convenient accident." Now, however, when all has conspired apparently to free Otilie from restraint, she comes to full consciousness of her mistake. She says, "I will never be Edward's wife. In a terrible manner God has opened my eyes to see the sin in which I was entangled. I will atone for it, and let no one think to move me from my purpose."

But our personages are not to escape from their entanglement easily. Though Otilie by her repentance and resolution feels herself freed from the burden of her fault and her misfortune, and has forgiven herself, yet the self-forgiveness is conditioned solely on the fullest renunciation persisted in for all time to come ; and her own weakness, which she cannot wholly conquer, and Edward's pertinacity, make a tranquil life of renunciation impossible. Only the death of the lovers can bring peace. Otilie determines to return to the school, never willingly to see Edward again, and to devote herself to God ; but Edward compels an interview and destroys her plans, though she remains firm in her renunciation, and subdues him by the saintly attitude which the Assistant noticed as so characteristic of her when she would not be further urged. She returns to the castle, as does Edward also. The Major too and Mittler come frequently. They endeavor to resume their old relation outwardly, without bitterness or cross purposes,

but with the new relations in some way taken up into it ; but Otilie neither speaks nor eats, and gradually fades away, till Mittler's rude, though unintentional, portrayal of her sin against the bond of marriage destroys her life. Edward lived on mechanically ; he seemed to have no tears left, and to be incapable of any further suffering ; his power of taking interest in what was going on diminished every day ; sometimes he would follow Otilie's example, and neither speak nor eat ; then his restlessness would overcome him, and he would desire to eat, and would begin to speak again ; then he would bewail his inability to follow in Otilie's footsteps, and say, "Genius is required for everything, even for martyrdom, as well as the rest."

At last they found him dead ; Charlotte feared that he had committed suicide, but the circumstances of his death prove that he died naturally. He died with his memorials of Otilie spread out before him, and, falling asleep "with his thoughts on one so saintly, might well be called blessed." Charlotte gives him his place by Otilie's side. The novel concludes : "So lie the lovers, sleeping side by side. Peace hovers above their resting-place. Fair angel faces gaze down upon them from the vaulted ceiling, and what a happy moment that will be when one day they wake again together !" •

This meagre sketch of the incidents omits innumerable artistic touches with which the artist charms

the reader, and the limits of this essay forbid my calling attention to them. I have intended only to present what is necessary for a consideration of the ethical content of the work; incidentally observing also how the characters ground the facts. It is evident that the passion of Edward and Ottilie, and its collision with the family, are the main theme of the novel. Everything else is incidental thereto. The principal element of the content of this novel is therefore love, and more especially that love of man for woman, and woman for man, on which the family is founded. As it is the special function of art to excite in the beholder a *feeling* of the true, and as it accomplishes its purpose by reducing the true to a form which appeals to the feeling, it is evident that it will use spirit in its internality mainly on the side of sentiment. Love as the paramount sentiment in some form — as religious love, parental or filial love, or love in which the difference of sex is an important factor — is therefore a favorite element of the content of works of Romantic Art. This is especially true of novels, so that it has been said that no novel could possibly be successful without at least one pair of lovers; and the artist usually considers that number insufficient. Goethe in the “*Elective Affinities*” furnishes several pairs.

In the devotion of one person to another of the opposite sex, the deepest thinkers have seen a manifestation of the highest phase of love. The utter surrender of self to find and know one's self for the first

time in another manifests the infinity of personality. The infinite character of love appears in that the true lover exists only in his beloved. It is evident that the collisions, in real life, of a sentiment so absorbing, with domestic, civil, and political relations, and with itself as manifested in different individuals, with duty, honor, and fidelity, furnish abundant material for the imagination of the artist. Then there appear an indefinite variety of grades of manifestation of the sentiment, from the shallowest and most sensuous passionate desire to the highest and truest devotion, determined by the temperament and character of the lover. No two of the lovers in the "Elective Affinities" exhibit the passion in the same form. There is also an inherent imperfection in the sentiment itself, in that the loved object is a special individual. Baron Bunsen, dying, recognized and repudiated this limitation, when he said to his wife, "We shall meet again, for I have loved the eternal in you"; but ordinarily we love the special and particular. Hegel has expressed with his accustomed vigor and completeness the limitation of the special phase of love which is the principal element of the content of the work we are considering; and he furnishes the key to the ethical validity of Goethe's treatment of the situation, in the consideration of love, under the general heading of Chivalry in his "Aesthetik."¹ The obstinacy with which the lover insists that only the one particular individual he has selected can possibly meet the

¹ Hegel's Philosophy of Art, Bryant, p. 136 *et seq.*

requirements of his nature, lays the foundation for distressing collisions. In this novel the principal collision is with the monogamic family which God and man have instituted as the fundamental secular institution. The institution has *its* limitations. The true family should have for its foundation true love, and then no collision of the kind here portrayed would be possible; but there are marriages of convenience, marriages of vanity and ambition, and marriages of friendship, and none of these are secure against love. Goethe has given us four instances of marriages of convenience; namely, the first marriages of Charlotte and Edward, which were entered into at the solicitation of family and friends; and (we may assume) the respective marriages of the Count and Baroness. The first two continued peacefully to their natural termination, not through any inherent validity, however, but because no occasion for collision occurred. The second two were not so fortunate, but Goethe is careful of the legal bond. The Count and Baroness must wait, however unwillingly, till the death of the Countess sets the Count free. Luciana's marriage with the Baron is a marriage of vanity and ambition, and we can readily see that trouble between Luciana and the Baron is very sure to arise. The marriage of Charlotte and Edward is a marriage of friendship. Their early love was a mere childish affection, and the respect and esteem which had succeeded are not the ideal foundation of marriage. Hence it is not inartistic to present a collision between this marriage

and true love, as it would have been had true love existed between Charlotte and Edward.

In considering the validity of the "Elective Affinities" as a work of art, the question arises primarily, Ought the artist to have selected this particular collision as a theme? If it is a truth of human experience, that is surely some justification; and Goethe says: "Indeed, there is not a line in the 'Elective Affinities' that is not taken from my own experience, and there is more in it than can be gathered by any one from a first reading. . . . No one can fail to recognize in it a deep, passionate wound, which shrinks from being closed by healing, a heart which dreads to be cured. In it, as in a burial urn, I have deposited, with deep emotion, many a sad experience. The 3d of October, 1809, set me free from the work, but the feeling it embodies can never quite depart from me."

In a letter to Bettine he says: "The poet was, at the development of this sad fate, deeply moved. He has borne his share of pains; chide him not, therefore, that he calls upon his friends for sympathy. Since so much which is sad dies, unmourned, the death of oblivion, the poet has here proposed to himself, in this one-fabled lot, as in a funeral urn, to collect the tears for much that has been neglected." But not all human experiences can properly be portrayed in a novel. I am inclined to think, however, that in these times, when the bond of marriage is lightly assumed and lightly broken, and the passion of love is the

sport of children, a novel treating this collision ethically is timely and desirable.

A second question is, Does Goethe portray the collision from a true ethical standpoint? The answers of different commentators to this question have differed *toto cælo*. Goethe says, "Not many pleasant remarks were vouchsafed me about that novel." The Encyclopædia Britannica says, "In 1809 he finished the 'Elective Affinities,' a story which is always cited to prove the immoral tendency of his works." Bettine vehemently upbraids Goethe for not having done precisely what the accusers of the novel say that he has done; namely, for not having made love the conqueror. In this country it has been considered sufficient to prove the immoral tendency of the "Elective Affinities," that a person prominently connected with social movements, accounted disreputable, should have been invited to write the Introduction to one of its editions. It has been taken for granted, that, if it could serve any purpose of such persons, it must necessarily be bad; but the Introduction candidly admits that the work will furnish cold comfort for such as find the restraints of permanent marriage irksome, and that to such its conservatism will prove an unwelcome surprise. When one remembers that the advocates of slavery, polygamy, and drunkenness have long been accustomed to draw their strongest arguments from the Bible, the fact that persons alleged to be impure have commended the "Elective Affinities" is not altogether conclusive of its impurity. The work itself

furnishes no warrant whatever for such conclusion. Much of the unintelligent, hostile criticism of the novel is really based on the assumption that Goethe's own life indicated a loose view of marriage, and that therefore the immoral construction of his work is the true one. But Goethe says, and with direct reference to this novel, "The late Reinhard of Dresden said he often wondered that I had such severe principles with respect to marriage, while I was so tolerant in everything else." Those who have studied the novel intelligently and deeply, — e. g. Solger, Rosenkranz, Düntzer, Herman Grimm, and Mrs. C. K. Sherman, — all these thorough students of the work find in it a profoundly moral content. Lewes, with a dispassionate and unpartisan liberality, agrees neither with those who find the novel moral, nor with those who find it immoral. He thinks all depends upon how you take it; and this is superficially true. One may say that the final catastrophe results from the failure of the personages to respect the validity of love (Charlotte takes this view of the death of the child); or one may say that the error of falling in love with a person already married can only be atoned by death.

The ethical content of the work is, in my view, this: the necessary subordination, in the sphere of real life, of subjective passion, even though pure and true, to the objective institution, even though not ideally perfect. Ottilie's love is innocent; it had its beginning long before the interference of other claims; it is as deep and true and perfect as the artist could

make it ; and in itself considered, it is entitled to realization in marriage ; for

“ Love, in human wise to bless us,
 In a noble *pair* must be ;
 But divinely to possess us,
 It must form a precious *Three*.”

But, unfortunately for Ottilie, Edward's obstinacy has erected an impassable barrier here. If her love is valid against a marriage of friendship, his is not. He has no right to marry and unmarry at will. The interests of society, and therefore the true interests of the individual, demand permanence for the family. The fact that Charlotte does not love Edward, and that she would be willing to have the marriage dissolved, is not sufficient. It is not a question of subjective inclination.

It being settled, then, that the existing marriage must not be violated, the effect upon the individuals concerned will depend upon their respective characters. The Captain and Charlotte easily restrain and renounce their passion. They are not made for love. Ottilie endeavors to renounce, sincerely and religiously strives to overcome, and perhaps would have succeeded so far as to live on heart-broken, but tranquil, if she could have had help, or even no hindrance, from Edward ; for though her whole being has gone into her love, she has strength of character and patience enough to wait,—for after all it is but waiting. Goethe says, “ What a happy moment that will be when one day they wake again together ! ”

Death cancelled the marriage bond. It is in the sphere of real life, here in this world, that their love must be subordinated. External marriage, without true spiritual union, is only "till death do us part," — so that Otilie could look to the future with happy expectation. But how could she ever be happy with Edward? He is so obstinate, yet so weak, — so selfish, yet without self-control; but love is self-denying, not self-seeking, and perhaps Otilie can make a true lover even of Edward.

Rosenkranz thinks that the Fate element in this novel is of principal importance. He says, "The 'Elective Affinities' represent to us a tragic fate." This statement is misleading, if understood to mean that the triumph of Fate over man is the main content of the work. Such interpretation would be correct, if this narrow span were all; but to one who measures justly the capacity and endurance of the human spirit, Fate is a subordinate factor. It is evident from expressions in "Meister," that Goethe views the complications of Fate merely as obstacles which the true spirit must overcome. The Stranger says to Wilhelm: "The fabric of our life is formed of necessity and chance. The reason of man takes its station between them, and may rule them both; it treats the necessary as the groundwork of its being; the accidental it can direct, and guide, and employ for its own purposes; and only while this principle of reason stands firm and inexpugnable does man deserve to be named the god of this lower

world. But woe to him who, from his youth, has used himself to search in necessity for something of arbitrary will, — to ascribe to chance a sort of reason, which it is a matter of religion to obey ! Is conduct like this aught else than to renounce one's understanding, and give unrestricted scope to one's inclinations ?" It seems as if Goethe might have had this passage in mind when he created the character of Edward, and the circumstances with which he has surrounded him. Whether we consider the outer fate of external events, or the inner fate of temperament and natural disposition, both of which aspects of fate have full play in this novel, yet it is equally true of both that it is the business of the human spirit to overcome fate, and free itself from all determination save the highest self-determination.

The supposition that the influence of external fate is the principal content of the "*Elective Affinities*" contradicts Goethe's conception of the true method of a novel ; he makes Serlo and Wilhelm agree, "that in the novel some degree of scope may be allowed to Chance, but that it must always be led and guided by the sentiments of the personages ; on the other hand, that Fate, which by means of outward, unconnected circumstances carries forward men, without their own concurrence, to an unforeseen catastrophe, can have place only in the drama ; that Chance may produce pathetic situations, but never tragic ones."

The "*Elective Affinities*" teaches many valuable lessons as to the conduct of life. I select these : it

teaches, that the elective affinity of love cannot be ignored, if one would marry happily ; that one must cure his spiritual diseases by the activity of his own soul, neither accusing Fate of his misfortunes, nor seeking relief in the mediation of accident ; but it teaches most explicitly of all, that man, as a rational being, may not yield, as a chemical element may, to a natural affinity, but must regard his duties and preserve inviolate the institutions of society, — disregarding them only at peril of his life.

X.

CHILD LIFE AS PORTRAYED BY
GOETHE.

BY MRS. CAROLINE K. SHERMAN.

EVERY great poem is of necessity an organic unity. Its parts, even to minute details, are dependent each on the other and subservient to the whole, as the whole in its turn is likewise subservient to each of its parts. The poet may claim to sing as the birds sing, admitting no other motive than the relief of his love-laden heart ; he may be conscious of no earnest moral purpose, no avowed intention of putting in rhyme things never yet attempted in prose or verse. Yet, if he be a genuine poet, his song freely expresses the dominant impulse, which gives the key-note, and all the variations but echo and re-echo the main idea. Goethe more than any other poet has disclaimed the charge of ultimate ends and final purposes in his writings, and still students of Goethe pore over his works, bent on finding the central unifying idea, its manifold form of expression, its artistic development, as also its deep moral significance. And with right they do this ; for the poet, whether working consciously or otherwise, in so far as he is a poet, works

not from any whim or caprice, but according to the divine harmony within him, bringing the chaotic disorder of the world of fact into forms of relation and beauty, reducing the distracted many to the Complete One, and finding in that One the harmonious *All*, an organic whole.

Still, although recognizing, as we do, the vital unity of each of Goethe's masterpieces, the interdependence of all the parts, and their necessary relation to the whole, it is nevertheless altogether possible that many an episode may be thrown in, having no direct bearing on the whole; that beauty here, as elsewhere, may be "its own excuse for being"; and that one might as well ask why the blush was on the rose, or the tint on the peach, as to question the significance of the various phases of childhood portrayed in Goethe's works. Yet as a Darwin finds utility even in the most delicate beauty, — finds that it renders an all-important service in the development of Better up to Best, so we see that Goethe quite as often passes from the *beautiful* by way of the true to the *useful*, as from the useful by way of the true to the beautiful, and that the Child Life which he delights to picture is no idle accessory, but has always a distinct bearing on the whole.

It was but natural that the morning-red of Goethe's own happy childhood should lend some color to these portraits. Here, as elsewhere, Goethe looked in his own heart and wrote. His childhood was, in many respects, an ideal one, — not extraordinary in

any abnormal sense: on the contrary, it was normal, as following the highest type, and reaching the flower and perfection of childhood.

Beautiful in person, endowed with healthful physical senses, the world of illusion was to him a veritable paradise of delights. He had a comprehensive mind, that grasped the things of sense, and easily discovered their order and relation. Prompted by that childish curiosity which later leads to rich scientific investigation, study was to the child Goethe but the opening of realm beyond realm of new discovery. On the moral side there was neither the hypersensitive conscience that belongs to the child of weak nerves, and whose fate is to die young, nor yet was there a rude indifference to the rights and privileges of others. A strongly affectionate nature and heart-felt sympathy for all about him, no doubt, had a controlling influence in a moral direction; while, on the religious side, as a boy Goethe was full of awe and reverence for that Unseen Power, which he recognized, not only as the beneficent Creator and wise Preserver, but also as the awful Thunderer, the grim Destroyer, laying waste the earth by fire and flood. This Unseen Power, even at that early age, confounded the boy's faith. He found it hard to reconcile divine goodness with painful facts; but here, as later in the problem of Faust, a healthful optimism prevailed, and the boy trusted, as the heart of childhood will trust, that "somehow good will be the final goal of ill"; and then, with that "familiar grasp of

things divine" so becoming in the reverent child, he built an altar to his unknown God, hoping, since the great God did not deign to manifest himself in the flesh, that he might at least approach him with sacrificial offerings of beauty, and worship him by means of symbols. Here, too, we see that the sensuous child-poet was father of the man. From first to last, Goethe could approach the Infinite with no cold, formal abstractions. In beautiful, sensuous forms he must meet his divinity, make his confession, and breathe his aspirations. From the *beautiful* to the good, from the good to the beautiful, was Goethe's impulse, or, as Plato has it, "from fair forms to those still fairer, and so on up to the highest Good." This tendency in the child Goethe from the beautiful to the good was nothing individual, peculiar to himself. It is the natural tendency of every healthful child, and when parents and teachers will understand it there will be less need of arbitrary rules and dogmatic precepts.

Goethe's surroundings as a child were favorable for a normal development. The inflexibility of the overwise father, sternly in earnest for the good of his children, was modified by the joyous sunny temperament of the mother. The father appealed to the head, the mother to the heart. If the father was sometimes over-persistent and inexorable in his demands, the little mother, as Goethe was pleased to call her, could charm away any ill effect by her glad presence. Not that the father was a hard taskmaster,

but he had his own views of education, which to him were ideal, and in many respects were so; only it is so hard sometimes to draw the dividing line between what is ideal and what is mere hobby. Goethe's father occasionally overstepped this boundary, which is pardonable, perhaps, when we remember how excellent his plans were in the main, and what a strong influence for good they exerted on the boy, — when we remember, too, that the ideal system of education, which Goethe unfolds in "*Wilhelm Meister*," existed in crude form in the brain of the elder Goethe.

How happily Goethe remembered his childhood, — his free play in the world of sense, his first hints of self-consciousness, the gradual unfolding of ethical and spiritual powers, — he has narrated in the autobiographical sketches, which he calls *Truth and Poetry*, and which by no means signify *Truth and Fiction*, but *Truth* and that kind of *Poetry* which, as Aristotle says, comes nearer to vital truth than history. What is given in detail in these sketches is again found in lines of exquisite poetry in the *Prelude to "Faust,"* which find an echo in every heart that yet remembers its own glad spring-time: —

"Then give me back the years again
When mine own spirit too was growing,
When my whole being was a vein
Of native songs within me flowing;
Then slept the world in misty blue,
Each bud the nascent wonder cherished,
And all for me the flowerets grew
That on each meadow richly flourished:

Though I naught had, I had a treasure,
The thirst for truth and in illusion pleasure.
Give me the free, unshackled pinion,
The height of joy, the depth of pain,
Strong hate, and stronger love's dominion,
O, give me back my youth again!"

The portraits of child life in Goethe's works that are most familiar are those of Felix and of Mignon in "Wilhelm Meister." This social romance, as we all know, represents the development of the individual as he passes through the various phases of social life, seeking not so much to contradict and subvert these social forms, as was the case with the aggressive Faust, but wisely to appropriate from them that which shall tend to his own advancement. Not revolution, but evolution, is Wilhelm Meister's motto. He finds no fault with the established order of things,—is no radical reformer, who sees the world out of joint, and considers it his duty to set it right. He accepts his environment as it is, with the purpose of wringing from it that which is peculiarly his own, or that which will bring him into most harmonious relations with his conditions. We know through what various degrees of culture Wilhelm Meister passed;—the beneficial influence which commercial pursuits had upon him, leading him to recognize the value of material gain only so far as it was subservient to spiritual needs, and the influence of the dramatic profession, by which he was led from that which seems to that which is. Art showed him his own possibilities and at the same

time his limitations. Through religion he recognized his position and relation to the universe. We know what an important part woman plays in the history of this development. At every stage of the process her power is manifest. She may attract, she may repel; but either force, attraction or repulsion, has its weight and affects his course.

It was specially fitting that in this novel, which deals with the development of the individual as such, woman should have had so active a part; for thus far in the world's history her influence has been chiefly with man as an individual. How great that power has been, Goethe is free to admit. If he has delineated women as they are, with their weak littlenesses and frivolities, he has also shown the divine power of woman and the moral order which reigns where woman reigns. "But," says Goethe, "what in us women leave uncultivated, *children* cultivate when we retain them near us." Wilhelm passes through all the stages of apprenticeship; yet not until he recognizes and assumes the duties of a parent does his apprenticeship end. Now he is no longer an isolated individual, a mere learner, a passive recipient. He is bound by family ties, and is now conscious of his duties and privileges as a citizen. It is the child Felix, well named the Happy-One, who gives the finishing stroke to his apprenticeship. "Notwithstanding his experience of life, it seemed as if his observation of this child was giving him his first clear insight into human nature. Both the theatre and the

world appeared to him as a multitude of thrown dice, upon whose upper surface a higher or a lower number was marked, and which when added together make up a certain sum. But here in this child one single die was placed before him, upon whose several sides the value and worthlessness of human nature were plainly indicated."

Felix, as we know, was the son of Wilhelm and Mariana. He is first introduced as a child of three years, bright as the sun. "His clear eyes and open countenance were shaded by the most beautiful golden locks, and his dark, delicate, and softly bending eyebrows adorned a forehead of glittering whiteness, while the ruddy hues of health glowed upon his cheeks." Goethe's ideal of healthy, happy childhood. At first the reader supposes him to be the child of the sickly sentimental Aurelia; but when he called her mother without any tenderness of tone, we at once suspect that this healthful child of nature is not the offspring of the super-emotional woman. Goethe understood the laws of heredity too well for that. Felix bears a close resemblance to his father, in that he is docile and tractable, passive in a receptive sense, yet, like his father, active and ready to appropriate and assimilate that which is peculiarly his own. Felix is no saint. He has the faults of a child. He persists in drinking from the decanter, instead of using the glass, and preferred eating from the dish rather than from a plate. He slams the doors, or leaves them open. In other words, he is the winsome, attractive, natural child of

the Kindergarten, rather than the morbidly good child of the Sunday-school book. His heart is tender and affectionate, but human rather than humane. When the cook cut up some pigeons, he struck at her; but the favorable impression which this produced on his father was soon destroyed, when he saw him mercilessly killing frogs and tearing butterflies' wings to pieces, — like the child of our acquaintance, who thought it cruelly wicked to kill robins, but all right to kill sparrows. Felix was also highly delighted when he could sit down in a corner with a book; saying with a serious face, "I must study this learned stuff," though he was ignorant of his letters, and refused to learn them.

Wisely directed, he will become the well-balanced man. The father sees this, and now the chief anxiety of the man, who had hitherto lived only for self-development, is the education of his boy, — his other Ego; and yet almost the first observation which the father makes, an observation common to all parents, is that the child is educating him rather than he educating the child. For the child's sake he values property, studies social politics and the various forms of public life. So completely now is his life controlled by the interests of the child, and pedagogics form so important a part of the Journeymanship, that it would seem almost as if the child's development, and not that of the father, were the central idea, — calling to mind the old insolvable problem, "Does the tree exist for the blossom, or the blossom for the tree?"

The harmonious culture of all the faculties is the father's aim for the child. To this end he follows as well as bends the natural inclination. Before giving instruction he waits for the child to ask, "What is it?" or, as Jean Paul says, is cautious not to give the draught before the child has the thirst.

With an enthusiasm worthy of Frederick Fröbel he enters into the child's interests and sympathies, valuing symbolic culture and industrial training. So far as is possible, he places him in the midst of glad surroundings, well knowing that a happy environment is to a child what sunshine is to a plant. Those good people whom he would have the child imitate must also be glad and happy, since children usually copy those individuals who seem to live most happily. He will have the child educated to live in the *Now*, and find its happiness in the way of culture rather than at some distant end. The happiness, however, which Goethe seeks for children, is not simply glad, sensuous animal existence. The child has within him the possibilities of rational and spiritual being. He can attain complete development, actual happiness, only in the realization of these. Happiness for child or man is found only in moral freedom. Selfishness is the fate and fetter of the child, as well as of the adult. Each in his own way must work out the difficult problem from fate to freedom. At every step, the child, as well as the father, is called upon to renounce. Never for the sake of renunciation, however. It must be the denial of self only for the higher profession of self.

In the harmonious culture of all the varied powers of the child, Goethe emphasizes with special stress that which no one brings into the world, and yet that upon which depends everything through which a man becomes a man on every side, — Veneration. The child must reverence that which is *above* him, which is reflected and revealed at first in his parents, teachers, and superiors. He must reverence what is *beneath* him, — that which humbly ministers to his happiness and well-being, as also that which hurts or harms him ; for even this he must recognize as a force, which it well behooves him to treat with respect, and to which he must on many an occasion make terms of peace, and perhaps sacrificial offerings. He must also respect himself, not with vain pride and isolated egotism, but remembering that he too is one of many, — he, too, is a central point from which good can and ought to emanate.

These three forms of reverence are one, and the one is three. There cannot be reverence for what is above us without lifting ourselves toward it and so increasing our self-respect ; and the humblest is so allied to the highest that in respecting the lowest one does reverence to the highest. Goethe had need to lay emphasis on this one point of veneration, without which there can be no true culture. Without reverence for what is above him, the child may have self-assertion, but never self-respect. Without due regard for that which is beneath him, he will be at the tender mercies of Fate, and never arrive at the only true manhood, which is self-possession, ethical freedom.

Wilhelm Meister finds for Felix a school in which reverence holds as important a place as mathematics, — a school in which all formal outward signs of courtesy and respect rest on deep moral and religious foundations. Men are wont to call this ideal school of Goethe Utopian and visionary, but the dream of one age becomes the possibility of the next. Our children's children *may* attend common schools where ethics, and even religion emancipated from dogmatism, will find place in the curriculum.

While Felix is the glad, happy child, everywhere at home where there is earth, air, and sunshine, Mignon seems no child of earth, but a waif from that Paradise which is all love, light, and harmony. Felix has native strength. He can make his way from fate to freedom, wrestling, conquering, or renouncing. This world is his element, and as child or man he will wring from it that which is best for him. But Mignon is nowhere at home. A yearning, an irresistible longing, fills her heart. Her kingdom is not of this world. Hunt for it as much as she may, the home she seeks is laid down on no map. Goethe portrays her as a child of sunny Italy, the offspring of a most unfortunate union, which a pitiless Fate cruelly brought about in the tenderest guise. Her father was a religious enthusiast, given over to emotions half spiritual, half physical, which for a time exalted him to the seventh heaven and then cast him into an abyss of dejection and misery. Rescued from this unnatural condition by the power of love, he learns when it is

too late that the object of his love is his own sister. With all the reckless frenzy incident to such a nature, he will hear nothing of renunciation. He looks upon social law as a violence to nature. In the madness of despair he demands that the heart should follow the impulse of unconscious nature rather than the cold formal rules of reason. He refuses to see that he is not living in the free world of his own thoughts, but in a state where laws and regulations are as unchanged as the principles of nature, because they are based upon nature.

So we see that, while the religious element is the leading trait in his character, it is the *form* of religion for which he cares, and not its moral content. He will have the emotional part of religion, its ecstasies, its soul intoxications and sweet deliriums, but not its self-abnegations, and triumphs that come only of painful conquests. Fate overtakes him, since he follows inclination rather than duty. He becomes a wretched wanderer, finding consolation for the gloomy vagaries of his brain only in his harp. The mother too was of a religious disposition. She never knew the character of her offence. By a pious fraud she was led to believe that she had sinned against her spiritual nature in engaging herself to a priest. Her misery and repentance over this unwilling sin is greater even than her love for her child. Religious madness and enthusiasm happily cheer her soul, and death brings a speedy release.

These were the parents of Mignon. Deprived of

their care, she lived with a worthy family near the sea. "Soon she evinced the greatest fancy for climbing, and to imitate the difficult feats of the rope-dancer seemed to be a mere impulse of her nature. To do this more easily, she changed clothes with the boys who were her companions, and, although such conduct was considered unbecoming, it was permitted. Her love of wandering often led her far from home, and, though she often went astray and for long periods, she never failed eventually to return. She would then take her seat beneath the pillars of a portico before a large country mansion in the neighborhood, where she was allowed to remain as long as she pleased. She would rest upon the steps, or at times, running through the spacious hall, would linger among the statues." One day she continued absent. She was stolen by a band of strolling players, who knew her value as a rope-dancer. Rescued by Wilhelm Meister from their brutal treatment, he became her protector. Her singular nature as well as her origin is a mystery. She frequently remained quite silent for an entire day. Sometimes, however, she answered more readily, but in so strange a way that it left doubtful whether her peculiarity arose from shrewdness or ignorance of the language, as she generally expressed herself in broken German mingled with French and Italian, and yet in no language could she express herself with facility; and the difficulty seemed to arise from her mode of thought rather than from any defect of speech. Notwithstanding her great wish to learn, her progress

was slow and laborious. It was the same with her writing, — a task at which she toiled. It was only when she sang and touched the guitar that she appeared to have an organ which opened and displayed the emotion of her soul.

It may be noted, in passing, that Goethe takes a generous pity on those quiet reticent natures who have little gift of language. He is sure to find for them some form of expression that will be a relief to the overburdened heart, and by means of which we may know the rich fulness of their nature. Otilie, in the "*Elective Affinities*," is better understood through her diary, and Mignon, who lacks even the ordinary gift of language, finds free expression only in music. Goethe recognized the value of his own ready power of expression, and the words which he puts in the mouth of Tasso were no doubt his own sentiment:

" Though in their mortal anguish men are dumb,
To me a God hath given to tell my grief."

"The force of Mignon's ripening nature often rendered Wilhelm anxious and fearful. The warmth of her disposition toward him seemed to increase daily, and her whole being seemed agitated with a silent restlessness." That love which can brook no rival becomes with her an all-absorbing, though only half-conscious passion. This ungratified love preys on her frail body, and finally destroys it; but not until Mignon has learned the one lesson which this greatest of novels teaches, — self-renunciation, which is no stoical abnegation, but the surrendering of the

demonic, as Emerson calls it, for a celestial love. She becomes

“Faithful, but not fond,
Bound for the just, but not beyond.”

Like Ottilie, she finds sweet consolation in useful activity and willing service. An unerring instinct leads her to comfort the old harper, whom she little dreams to be her own father. She teaches Felix to read, and whenever her heart feels any want she resolves that Felix shall fill the void. More and more she seems to lose her hold upon earth. Dressed in long white attire, and sitting with Felix in her lap, she resembled a departed spirit, while the boy was life itself. It seemed as if heaven and earth were in one embrace. The death which soon follows is hardly death, but rather a glad transition, as if the yearning spirit had now found its native home.

Goethe has thrown an indescribable charm about this mysterious child, whose deep and impenetrable nature scarcely allows us to conjecture its emotions. Nothing therein is plain and evident save her grateful love to her benefactor, and the vague weird notes of her music, which hint far more than they express. “Know’st thou the land?” is the continuous refrain which she echoes and re-echoes. Her home-sick soul longs for its far-off home, and utters that cry which is the cry of every human soul far off from God, who is our home.

As in the old Greek tragedies the chorus always gives the word of explanation, so in the chorus which

celebrates the obsequies of Mignon we have the significance of this mysterious child, whose being was love and harmony, but who could find no rest or satisfaction in the discordant world of sense. "Look forward with the eyes of the spirit," says the chorus. "Let imagination awake, which bears Life, the fairest and highest, to a habitation beyond the stars." And again, "Children, hasten into life! In the pure robe of beauty, may Love meet you with heavenly countenance and the garland of immortality." Wilhelm Meister is brought to realize that he is not only a social and moral being, and capable of development as such, but that he is also a religious being. In his own soul a voice echoes again and again, "Know'st thou the land?" He may not be able to answer the question, satisfactorily. He certainly knows that he will find no answer in the world of sense, for it is laid down on no maps. He may try to avoid the question, but it will force itself upon him whether he will or not. It will appeal to him in Nature and in all the varied forms of Art, but most of all in music. For there is no speech or language which appeals so directly to the human soul as music.

Music, when sensuous and coming of a lower strain, appeals to the lower nature with seductive power. It is all absorbing and sense-intoxicating. The victim knows the raptures of ecstasy and the madness of despair. But when music appeals, not from sense to sense, but from soul to soul, it creates an unrest, a dissatisfaction with the things of sense, and leads the

soul beyond these and beyond the limits of formal reason into the higher realms of insight and faith, — a faith that is beyond reason, not below it.

Mignon had no language but music, and indeed needed none. Renouncing the mysterious seductions of sense, she rises

“ Higher far,
Upward into the pure realm
Where all form
In one only form dissolves, ” —

where there is no thought of sex,

“ The angel choir
Seek not to know of youth or maid, ” —

where there is no seal of silence, and soul answers to soul in its own language.

In the drama “Götz with the Iron Hand,” we have a picture of Karl, the only child of the great hero. This play is rather a series of pictures than a genuine drama. There is no central point about which the entire interest revolves, and the characters are interesting simply as portraits taken in various positions and placed in contrast with each other as light and shade. Götz, the hero of the play, is a man and a hero after one’s own heart. His very presence is a mighty force. He creates about him that enthusiasm of humanity which compels his adherents to follow him to death. Like many of the true knights of old, he goes about *righting* the wrong wherever he finds it. As an individual he is without fear or reproach. Like the other knights

of the fifteenth century, he asserts his liberty and independence, and this liberty, so far as it pertains to himself and his followers, is no selfish, licentious liberty. It is liberty to correct the wrong and enforce the right according to his own ideas, — the liberty of asserting his moral self. He has learned the meaning of *I* in its most exalted sense, but he has not learned the meaning of *You*. A new era has dawned. Fraternity is now the word, as well as Liberty. The new era is irresistible, and Götz tenaciously clinging to the relics of the past, obstinately resisting the progress of events, is overtaken by his fate; for Nature punishes ignorance and narrow-mindedness as she punishes crimes.

The calm, quiet picture of the meek little Karl might seem to have no connection with the bold egoism of Götz, or with the leading idea that men cannot successfully wage war against the World-Historical Spirit. We see Karl first as begging his aunt for the story of the *Good* Child. That he should ask for a story of a good child rather than of a bad one, is indicative of Karl's quiet, effeminate nature; for most children prefer the story of the bad child, not because they themselves are bad, but because they like the tragic, and are sure that dramatic collision will happen when the bad antagonizes the good. The aunt requires the boy to tell her the familiar story, and he is taught to repeat it with such literal exactness that the spirit is entirely lost in the verbiage. Later the father comes, and the joy and interest of the boy

are manifested by going to the provision cellar with his aunt, rather than to the stable with the hostler.

"He never will be his father," said the hostler, "else he would have gone with me to the stables."

When he greets his father, he does not look upon him with proud admiration as a hero. He simply asks, "Have you brought me anything?" Then he tells his father, "I have learned a great deal."

"What may that be?" asks the father.

"Jaxthausen is a village and a castle on the Jaxt, which has appertained in property and heritage for two hundred years to the lords of Berlichingen."

"Do you know the lords of Berlichingen?" asks the father, who sees with contempt that the boy's learning is so abstruse that he does not know his own father. "To whom does Jaxthausen belong?"

"Jaxthausen is a village and a castle upon the Jaxt—"

"I did not ask that," returned the father. "I knew every path, pass, and ford about this place before ever I knew the *name* of the village, castle, or river. Is your mother in the kitchen?"

"Yes, papa, they are cooking a lamb and turnips."

"Do you know that too, Jack Turnspit?"

"And my aunt is roasting an apple for me."

"Can't you eat it raw?"

"It tastes better roasted."

And when he is introduced to Weislingen, the child says, "Be merry, dinner will soon be ready."

"Happy boy!" says Weislingen, "that knowest no worse evil than the delay of dinner."

This picture of the placid, meek boy heightens by contrast the heroic valor of his father. We have said that this play is rather a series of contrasting pictures than a genuine drama. Yet the little scene of Karl with his father has a closer bearing on the leading idea of the play than at first appears. As the father will not come into harmony with the spirit of the times, but clings persistently to a past that is dying or dead, so the son is carelessly indifferent to things and facts about him, and clings to far-off, meaningless words. The son ignores the *Here*, as the father ignores the *Now*.

Goethe's greatest drama offers little scope to children; for, with the first kiss of Faust, Margaret is no longer a child, and Euphorion, the offspring of Faust and Helen, is more of an allegorical character than living flesh and blood. Yet in connection with the child Euphorion occurs a passage which without question emphasizes the high estimate that Goethe eventually placed upon the family relation, —

“Love in human wise to bless us
In a noble pair must be,
But divinely to possess us,
It must form a precious three,” —

and the child of this ideal union is significantly named Euphorion, “Bringer of Good.”

It is worthy of notice, that, when Goethe wishes to make a woman specially attractive, he surrounds her with beautiful children. “Nothing,” said Goethe, “is more charming than to see a mother with a child upon

her arm." "Nothing is more revered than a mother among many children." Ottilie is never so beautiful as when holding Edward's child. Charlotte in the midst of her younger brothers and sisters is the finest of the many fine pictures in "Werther." Goethe is said to have borrowed this scene from Rousseau. He borrowed not so much from Rousseau as directly from nature. Because Rousseau had given an equally beautiful picture was no reason why Goethe should not repeat it. As Chaucer was accustomed to say that he took possession of whatever he found directed to G. Chaucer, so no great poet need hesitate over any material at hand, provided he is sure the divine spark is his own.

Goethe not only develops the characters of his heroines by their contact with children, but he finds their relation to children the readiest way of describing them. With a single stroke of his pen he draws the distinction between Theresa and Natalie when he says, "Theresa trains children, Natalie instructs them." While Goethe ornaments Ottilie, Charlotte, Natalie, and Mignon with children, his weak characters, like the frivolous Philina and the super-sentimental Aurelia, have no power to attract them,—indeed, children are repelled from them,—but eventually, when Philina develops into a useful woman, worthy of the name, children are drawn to her.

Goethe has clearly shown that, where women are denied the marriage which the heart prompts, their resort is not, as has been hinted, in marriage with

another. According to Goethe, their happiness is then found in useful service, especially to children. This is manifestly the case with Otilie and with Mignon. Not to be crushed with the agony of disappointment, and not to realize the full measure of desolation, they spend themselves in useful activity, the noblest form of which is the care and instruction of children; and it may safely be said that nowhere has the realistic Goethe followed nature more closely than when he makes the instruction of children the happy alternative for those who are denied the perfect expression of love.

Although the children portrayed by Goethe occupy, of necessity, a subordinate position, they fill, as we have seen, no insignificant parts. As an artist Goethe might have introduced them simply as ornaments, for Beauty's sake alone; but although Goethe is pre-eminently an artist, he is none the less a rigid moralist and utilitarian of the strictest order. Everywhere in his works children serve a wise economy and earnest moral purpose,—developing the individual, as in “Meister,” to a closer sympathy with humanity; or compelling the individual for their sake to a more refined degree of Morality, as in the “Elective Affinities”; or demanding of society as well as the individual that renunciation which recognizes the claims of children as paramount to all other considerations,—a renunciation which, in its turn, leads to the higher advancement of society, as well as of the individual.

XI.

HISTORY OF THE FAUST POEM.

BY DENTON J. SNIDER.

THE connection between the composition of "Faust" and Goethe's own life has always been felt to be very intimate; the two run parallel. "Faust" ushers in the spiritual life of the poet, and closes with his bodily life; the work, quiescent for long periods, always starts afresh, gathering and preserving the bloom of many rich poetical epochs. Every true reader wishes to see the poem unfolding out of the life of the poet, and also to behold each portion developing out of the preceding portion, naturally and in due order. A history of the Faust poem, then, is the requirement; which will be, not a mere record of external incidents and facts, but an inner, genetic history of the work in its double relation to the poet and itself.

Critical opinion is divided concerning the point of time when Goethe first conceived and began to work upon his "Faust." The prevailing view has been that the beginning was made about the year 1772 or 1773, when the poet was twenty-three years old. Says Loeper (*Einleitung*, p. 5): "The day and hour

cannot be exactly fixed when Goethe, in that most fruitful period of his life as regards dramatic conceptions, 1772-76, laid hold of the Faust fable." But Schröer, in the Introduction to his excellent commentary on the poem, has given good reasons for referring its beginning at least as far back as 1769. This is also the date assigned by Eckermann and Riemer, who are supposed to have had documents for making out the chronology of the poet's works now inaccessible. Two citations from Goethe's letters bearing on this point are worth translating. "It is no trifling matter to represent outside of one's self, in the eighty-second year, what one has conceived in his twentieth." (Letter to Zelter, June 1, 1831.) Goethe was twenty years old in 1769. Again, in a letter to Wilhelm von Humboldt, March 17, 1832, written five days before his death, he says: "*It is over sixty years since the conception of 'Faust' lay before me clear, but the succession of its parts less complete.*"

The answer to these and similar passages is, that the old Goethe was inaccurate in his memory of the events of his youth. In a general way, however, it may be said that the conception of "Faust" goes back nearly forty years before the complete edition of the First Part, in 1808, and fully sixty years before the completion of the Second Part. Such is the first grand fact of the poem, a fact unique in literature; in one long human life the work blossoms, unfolds, matures; this life of the Poet is but his outer setting

in Time, yet it deeply suggests the life of the legend developing through the centuries.

In the history of the Faust legend we see how the fable of Faust has unfolded with the unfolding of the race, and bears in it the image of the ages. The true mythus is a growth, a never-ceasing development of an original germ, in which the people have put their own idea, and in this idea the spiritual march of the world mirrors itself; the legend grows with the growth of man, out of the same seedling, to the same altitude. Now Goethe the individual has to go through the same process to be the true singer; the Faust legend in its primitive germ will sprout within him in early youth, will grow through life, and bear its last fruits in extreme old age. The poet truly lives the life of the legend which he embodies in writ; and under its form he has to pass through what his race has passed through. Before he can sing his task to completeness, he must live, in those sixty years of his, ideally sixty centuries of his people at least. In him the Faust legend is no artificial thing, picked up from the outside to make verses about, but it is the germinal dot of his being, which blooms afresh in one individual life, the life of the legend and the race.

It is then, a matter of importance to trace back to Goethe's childhood the first faint impress of the legend stamped upon his susceptible soul. He had seen a puppet-play on the subject of Faust in Frankfurt when a boy,—probably had seen it often; then,

we may suppose, the first vague possibility was planted in him. The puppet-play which he saw is not known, but it was probably derived from Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus," which, though its original source was the old Frankfort Faust-book of Spiess, had been brought back to Germany by strolling bands of English players, and had shaped the dramatic form of the Faust legend. Thus the great Elizabethan era of dramatic creation throws out a line of descent to the German poem of Goethe. Shakespeare, as we see from several allusions, was also aware of the Faust legend, which, however, had not yet been ripened for him by time; hence, with true instinct, he chose, as his grand embodiment of the Teutonic mythus, the story of Hamlet the Dane, who is a first-cousin to German Faust, physically and spiritually, and, like Faust, was educated at the Protestant school of Wittenberg.

Perhaps we can point out the very egg that Marlowe's drama laid in Goethe's poem, which will hatch it out to a bird of such wonderful plumage and pinion. In the soliloquy that begins his play, Marlowe introduces Faust as disgusted with all knowledge, and giving himself up to magic. This is the primitive germ of denial, not by any means carried out to its full development by Marlowe; but Goethe will pick up the same germ in the first soliloquy of Faust, the form and substance of which are given by Marlowe, and let it unfold under the storm and sunshine of his whole life. The Faust of Marlowe is a Protes-

tant Faust, tragic, the Devil gets him ; through the puppet-play the germinal negation of that Protestant Faust, protesting in it against all science and truth, drops into the youthful soul of Goethe, most fertile of all spiritual soils. Goethe himself has, perhaps unconsciously, told his own tale ; he has in his " Wilhelm Meister " unfolded the history of a germ laid in a child's soul by seeing a puppet-play ; thence the child gets a tendency or impulse which unfolds into its life, whose record is that novel.

But a far mightier element was at work in the period, struggling, fermenting with some new change. There was a Faust spirit in the air of Germany, of all Europe, during Goethe's youth, and it was giving premonitions of the great impending Revolution, social and political. A time kindred in many respects to the Reformation awoke the sleeping Faust legend out of its peaceful century's slumber, and made it spring up with fresh life in all susceptible German hearts, particularly in those of the young poets. Several of Goethe's immediate circle of friends, Müller, Klinger, Lenz, tried their hand at writing Fausts. The great literary protagonist of new Germany, Lessing, had planned and partly written a Faust drama ; moreover, he had distinctly declared that the Faust legend offered a true theme for a great national poem.

The restless spirit of the time, struggling, protesting, was loudly calling for its poet, when the young Goethe stepped forth from the nameless ranks of men

with a response forever memorable. That first response was "Götz" and "Werther," in which productions the literary period of Germany known as "Storm and Stress" culminated in a vast tumultuous overflow of emotion, eternally self-generating and eternally self-destroying. The poet finished them in his Titanic vein; they had of course to be tragic, indeed self-annihilating; their end must be in the final conclusive protest against the world called death. Other poems, like "Prometheus" and "The Wandering Jew," conceived in the same spirit, he could not finish; in them the protest refuses to protest any longer, and the half-conscious thought seems to rise out of chaos and say: "Dear Poet, the problem in this world is not to die, but to live; to master fate, not to yield thereto; and it is thy function to reveal such mastery to mortal men."

In the same Titanic vein he conceived his Faust, whose disgust at knowledge he had himself experienced, chiefly in his student life at the University of Leipzig, whereby he had learned, as he declares, the vanity of all human science, at the early age of eighteen. He wrote much upon his "Faust" at this stormy period, almost finished it as is supposed, yet did not. Why? He could not; he had run against a wall which barred all progress, and which rose higher with advancing years. He first felt the vague instinct, then came to the clear insight, that Faust must be redeemed, must pass out of his Titanic protest into reconciliation. This is the wall which stopped him

so many, many years, but which he will at last climb over, when he will reveal the Paradise within. Of "Werther" he says, that he freed himself, by writing it, of his own tragic sentimentality; he slaughtered the sentimental hero of his romance, and thereby saved himself; through such vicarious offering of his shadow, he escaped the ghost-world. Clearly it will be his duty next time to save his hero as well as himself.

No sooner had he looked into the depths of the Faust legend, and had struggled to embody it, than he discovered his inability. It was the truest instinct which led him to lay it aside, and to wait for the experience of life. He must grow into the legend as the legend itself grew. This became the method of his life, — to unfold into completeness; it also became the method of his poem; his own life gave the literary procedure. "Faust" unfolds, step by step, not simply in the mind of its author, but also in its outer artistic form. Goethe had in his soul a vast germ, which could bloom and be fruitful only with time; the poem, imaging the poet's process, starts with a vast germ laid in Faust's soul; this germ is what develops through its own law into the existent work, a self-unfolding whole.

In this sense of mirroring the poet's innermost spiritual development, the poem is a biography; hardly in any other sense. It does not give the events of Goethe's life, it does not give the rise of its own poetical parts in chronological order; "Faust" was written backwards, forwards, and in between, at

various times of life. It might be called an ideal biography recording in the highest form of art the supreme moments of the supreme man of the age, which moments appear in the poem in succession, but really are the products of years of waiting and preparation. The mountain peaks, sunlit in the distance, we from the plain see in continuous line; but there are valleys deep and broad between them. Still the method of the poem is that of a growth, as Goethe's life was a growth. Here the poem and the life fall together, in this deepest fact of spiritual unfolding.

Not alone in life and art, but also in nature, Goethe saw the same essential fact. Nature is a self-unfolding too; from a primitive form she develops into a variety of forms; the leaf in the vegetable kingdom is to become flower, fruit, and even tree. "The Metamorphosis of Plants," a treatise by the poet on botany, is a beautiful image of the Faust method, a very Faust drama of plant life, and indeed the process of Goethe's own development. The poem grew as the flower; life, with its rain and sunshine, fostered it. Yet we must not think that, because it is life, it is not an idea; the idea is the very essence of life.

In the history of the composition of the First Part of Faust, there are two distinct periods, which are marked by definite dates: these are the first period, ending with the edition of 1790, and the second period, ending with the edition of 1808. These two periods are the clear landmarks, most important for

understanding the growth of the book, as well as the drift of the discussion upon it; we shall try to state what was contributed to the work by each of these periods, shunning as far as possible the vast fog-world of conjecture which environs the poem to infinity.

In 1790 Goethe gathered his Faust efforts of more than twenty years, and printed what he called "Faust, a Fragment," containing a little less than one half of the present First Part. In it, beside lesser omissions, were two great gaps, the first of which began with the second soliloquy of Faust, and extended to Mephisto's interview with the student, thus constituting the intellectual kernel of the poem, — altogether about 1,165 lines in the original. Doubtless some portions of this large deficit had been already sketched, — as, for instance, the scene of the Easter festival; but the whole was too fragmentary to be published even in this Fragment. It will be observed that the omitted section is in the main the unfolding of Mephisto. This deepest transformation of time and human experience the young poet could not manage: it was the first wall that he ran against. Still he saw that the thing had to be managed; the grand difficulty was, How? Wait, patient man! till the germ blossom and ripen; wait, and the secret will be told thee in full. Hardly less significant is the second great gap, containing those last scenes in which Mephisto is subjected to Faust, and is made an instrument for the attempted rescue of Margaret, who, nigh to death, is lying in the triple prison of the law, of insanity,

and of her own conscience. The poet probably knew, in a vague way, that all this had to be done too; but he could not get clear about the manner of doing it. With time, however, and valiant struggle, this last dark gap will be overarched with a perfect rainbow of poetry.

Such were the two grand omissions, highly significant of the poet and his development. But that which was announced in the Fragment of 1790, and announced for all time, was the primitive denial of Faust and the fall of Margaret. These two phases, in their very statement, we feel to be connected by some secret thread; to raise this secret thread into clear daylight is the great poetic problem. The first soliloquy, which was then printed, gives the germ of the whole poem, the original dual forces from which it springs: negation on the one hand, aspiration on the other. Then takes place that prodigious leap to the scenes in which Mephisto appears a full-fledged active person in the world. What connection between that first denial and this sudden fiend, with final outcome of his work in the fate of Margaret? Such is the chasm over which the bridge is to be built, and the poet must live it into being. From that primal negation as the germ, Mephisto will unfold; and Faust, from the dry student and professor, will be transformed into the youthful, passionate lover.

In this Fragment we can observe two chief experiences, that of the university with its unsatisfactory

knowledge, and that of a great breach in the Family ; both lay in the life of the young Goethe. But to show, step by step, how the Family is destroyed by that first negation, is the work of a far longer and deeper experience, which speaks of dire encounters with the Devil himself, whose genesis in this part is the supreme intellectual feat of the book. In the Fragment of 1790 we also find the "Witches' Kitchen," written at Rome in 1787. This scene, in connection with "Auerbach's Cellar," introduces us to the Perverted World, the true realm of Mephisto, and furnishes the immediate motive for Margaret's fall. But this phase of the poem is not complete in the Fragment; the Perverted World is still to receive an addition in "Walpurgis Night."

The reception given by the public to the Fragment of 1790 was by no means favorable; it was not at all to be compared to the mighty outburst of enthusiasm that hailed the appearance of "Werther." Goethe himself, in a half-humorous, half-complaining way, hints the lack of appreciation in the "Prologue on the Stage," prefixed first to the edition of 1808. Olympian Goethe, then, does want some recognition from mortals for his world-compelling work. A slight undertone of disappointment one may hear from him at this time, as he sadly strings his lyre; but cheer up, mighty heart! for no man knows better than thou, "What glitters is born for the moment, what is genuine endures for all time." If the general public was cold toward the work, the criti-

cism of the time was hardly better, and showed no appreciation of the significance of the poem. Indeed, when did it, or how can it? Loeper has dug out for us some hints of its tendency which are interesting. It laid hold savagely of small external details; it declared the language to be "dark, unintelligible," the usual charge of the ready critic against everything which he does not take in with his newspaper glance. It declared also, that the great master of German speech wrote bad German. Give us, O critic! some of your good German. And the style was not elegant, being written "in the tone of a street ballad-singer"; many of its incidents and expressions were "such as only the lowest populace could take delight in." So it is. What of it? Imagine a "Faust," or a "Hamlet," appearing to-day; then imagine what the Press and Magazine would make of it. Such a lack of recognition is not a matter evitable in the present state of the human mind,—nay, not a matter regrettable, when truly looked into; it is the fiery discipline which tests the permanent value of the great book, as well as the literary grit of the author. The diurnal writ cannot possibly measure the eternal writ, which is incommensurable,—cannot have any sympathy with it or knowledge of it,—hence can only light the fires of depreciation.

But under this ephemeral judgment another judgment, that of the eternal kind, was forming slowly but surely. Not till the great book takes posses-

sion of great souls, and grows to be a living fibre of their spiritual being, has it reached the tribunal which is to adjudicate its rights; then it will enter upon its true inheritance, and commence receiving even its canonization. After many years the mightiest thinkers of philosophic Germany, Schelling and Hegel, begin to utter the ultimate decision upon this Fragment. The first German critical minds, the two Schlegels, also contribute their part in the mean time; their school, the modern Romantic, gives continuous help for its appreciation. The most sympathetic and deepest-seeing of all these early views is that of Schelling, which deserves special emphasis at this point. Schelling could have known only the first Fragment when he delivered his lectures on the "Method of Academic Study" at Jena and Würzburg, 1802-5; yet he seems to divine, not merely the completed First Part, but the completed Second Part, in the final redemption and completion of the hero. The great philosopher turns a rapt seer in speaking of the poem, "which as yet must be grasped by anticipation rather than by knowledge," and he at once proclaims it to be "an original work in every respect, only to be compared with itself, and resting on itself." He sees far in advance that "the conflict must be solved in a higher way," and that Faust, "elevated to higher spheres, will be completed," — the very vision of the end of the Second Part. It looks almost as if the poet had followed the prophecy of the philosopher, or that the latter somehow had got-

ten a peep into the workshop of the poet. Moreover, Schelling feels the great scientific value of the book, "sufficient to rejuvenate science in this age"; he seems to feel that the development of the poem rests upon the same foundation as science itself, and advises its study to all "who wish to penetrate into the true sanctuary of Nature." Yet this does not hinder it from being philosophic in the profoundest sense, and he declares that, "if any poem can be called philosophic, this predicate must be applied to Goethe's '*Faust*' *alone*." Thus the two extreme poles of the great poem are indicated: it has the true development of Nature, and the true idea of Philosophy, in harmony; moreover, it is poetic in the best sense, yet is philosophic also, revealing "a new kind of Fate," the Fate not merely of the Deed, but also of Knowledge. Thus the mighty twins, Poetry and Philosophy, eternally fighting and clawing one another in the brains of lesser critics and poets, unite in one grand symphonious strain before the mind of Schelling, as he casts his look upon Goethe's poetic creation. Such is the broad view of the German philosopher, — quite the universal view, spoken in a few far-glancing prophetic words toward the close of his lectures. Nothing better has been said or can be said upon the poem, and the interpreter has but to fill out in detail the vast outlines of Schelling's hints, avoiding the merely poetic, or merely philosophic, or merely scientific, or any other merely one-sided method of exposition.

Hegel's profound appreciation of Faust is well known to his readers, but it has to be sought chiefly from books of his which were published after the completed Faust of 1808, and hence need not be cited in this connection. Still, in one of his early works, "The Phenomenology of Spirit," finished to the thunder of the cannon at the battle of Jena, he gives a subtle interpretation of the Earth-Spirit in the Hegelian manner, showing that the fragment had produced so strong an impression upon his thought, that he assigned it a place among the historic phases of consciousness.

Many years have passed since the appearance of the Fragment in 1790; but clearly it is creating its world, and rearing its own readers. It has gone deeply into the great spirits of the time and found lodgment there; assuredly they will take care of it, they will impart to it a share of their own immortality. That which makes the great book immortal is that it lives in the highest souls, those truly immortal. With time it will be preserved against the millions and the ravages of time. In this matter one feels always like speaking to the poet face to face, and addressing him out of the future centuries, not for his sake, as he hears it not, but for the sake of all toilsome unknown workers: — "Take heart, O much-tried scribe of the ages! be not cast down because the phantom of the populace buzzes neglectfully past thee; it will long be dead when thou art living, nay, it will be chiefly known hereafter for not having

known thee. Gird up thy loins anew ; a yet greater task is before thee, nothing less than to generate out of the soul of thy time the Devil lurking therein, and to reveal him in body to the sons of men. The greatest task laid upon human scribe is thine ; up, and be a-doing, courageous heart ! thou alone of the millions of these later centuries canst perform it."

Thus we may pass from the first period, embracing the Fragment of 1790 ; we now come to the second period of composition, which lies between the Fragment of 1790 and the completed First Part of 1808. In this period the two capital additions are the genesis of Mephisto, as Evil Principle, out of Faust's denial, and the beginning of his subjection to Faust in the attempted rescue of Margaret. The two great gaps which we noted in the Fragment are thus filled, and the poem in its First Part attains completeness after almost forty years of effort. These are doubtless the gaps of which Goethe repeatedly speaks in his correspondence with Schiller, and whose problem, though quiescent for long periods, never fully left him. The genetic hint, scarcely observable in the Fragment, has now unfolded into a conscious purpose, and the idea of final purification and restoration, vague and unclear in the Fragment, breaks forth into the full clearness of knowledge.

The Perverted World, or Mephisto's realm, also receives its completion in the two scenes of "Walpurgis Night." We saw in the Fragment the beginning and wild progress of this Perverted World in

two other scenes, "Auerbach's Cellar" and "Witches' Kitchen"; now it is unfolded into correspondence with a total plan. To this period belong the two Prologues, in which the poet indicates a clear consciousness of the nature of his theme and of his work. Moreover, in the "Prologue in Heaven," the Lord definitely promises that he will lead the struggling Faust through to light, in which promise we have a glimpse beyond the First Part of "Faust" into the Second Part.

The reception of the completed First Part was far more favorable than the reception of the Fragment had been. On all sides, there seems to have been a pretty general agreement as to the prodigious significance of the book. But the way had been prepared. The Fragment during eighteen years had been absorbed into many appreciative spirits, who were not only ready for, but had vaguely anticipated, the completed work. Moreover the scope of Goethe's other activities, — scientific, poetic, literary, — as well as the unity of his genius in all these activities, had begun to dawn generally upon his countrymen. Still there seems to have been nothing like an adequate exposition of it till ten years had passed, when Schubarth's book on "Faust" (1818) opens the long and ever-increasing list of commentaries, a list manifestly not to be closed by the present book. The criticism of "Faust" in Germany has been a prolific plant in fruitful soil, with many local turns and variations which no foreigner cares to follow. It has fluctuated

with the spiritual tendencies of the German people, indicating plainly that the great poem always mirrors itself differently at different periods, and must have with the new epoch a new interpretation. The older phase of Faust criticism seems to occupy itself more with the thought or idea of the poem, though not neglecting philological, mythological, and other aids. This phase is properly the philosophic, receiving its light from the unparalleled sunburst of German Philosophy during the first quarter of the present century. The later phase of Faust criticism seems to concern itself more about the external unity, or rather the want of unity, in the poem; its method is the historic, and shows the reaction against philosophy. Both these phases have their strong and weak sides, both supplement pretty well each other's defects. Let not the true-hearted student yield to the cry, that he should throw away the old, and take the new criticism, which is seriously inferior to the old, or philosophic, in depth of insight, while both need much correction in regard to sobriety of judgment.

The recent criticism of the First Part of "Faust" turns chiefly upon the manner in which the two editions of 1790 and of 1808 are to be viewed. The one set of critics sees in the completed First Part a double and inconsistent plan, two contradictory ideas, held together only by the art of the bookbinder, and not by that of the poet. The additions made in 1808 to the Fragment are, it is declared, really a different, nay, an antagonistic poem. Kuno Fischer, who may

be taken as a representative man of this party, says that the two sections of the poem, that of 1790 and that of 1808, "proceed from tendencies fundamentally diverse; they are in character wholly heterogeneous, and they are so to the extent of complete opposition." Thus our First Part, over whose completion we shouted such a hallelujah of rejoicing, has by the completion really been made incomplete, and old Goethe has been caught playing on the public another of his tricks of mystification. Fischer goes on to state that there is a fundamental difference between the two editions in the conception of both Mephisto and Faust. In the Fragment of 1790 Mephisto is declared not to be the Devil, such as he is in the later work, but a mischievous imp, "an elementary ghost," in the service of the Earth-Spirit. In reply to this view, Oettingen (*Vorlesungen über Faust*, Vol. I. p. 10) points out numerous passages in the Fragment which directly contravene Fischer's assumption, showing that Mephisto is regarded in them as the genuine Devil. Still, it cannot be denied that the Devil in lighter moods is fond of his impish joke, harmless enough; witness the scene in "Auerbach's Cellar." But this milder phase may well consist with his deepest deviltry. Still further, Fischer states that there is a contradiction in the character of Faust: in the original conception he was a sort of Prometheus in conflict with the established rule of the Gods, a genuine world-stormer, and hence tragic; but in the later, added part, the idea of purification

through struggle and suffering was introduced, with final reconciliation of the hero purged of Titanic denial. Again the answer has been made to this argument, that it really proves no inherent contradiction, but rather the contrary; Faust does begin as a world-storming Titan, but the whole course of the poem shows him cleansed of his Titanism, and coming into harmony with the world-order. Still it continues to be stubbornly maintained that the Fragment has the unity, and the total work has the split from top to bottom.

It is perhaps characteristic of the intellectual Germany of to-day, that this theory of Faust — shaded, to be sure, in manifold colors, from hazy gray to jet-black — is held by the most considerable German critics of the present time, Julian Schmidt, Friedrich Vischer, Karl Biedermann, etc. It finds its first germ in C. H. Weisse's book (1837), one of the earlier interpretations of "Faust," but the theory there is not at all drawn out to its later consequences. A kind of cult of the fragment of 1790 seems to have arisen in Germany, intimated in the words of Gutzkow: "'Faust' as Fragment is much dearer to all of us, than the completed 'Faust.'" Who are *all of us*? Certainly not the whole adoring the Whole, but some fragment worshipping the Fragment. The true and final conclusion of the theory is boldly drawn by Gwinner and others, who maintain that the sole unity is the Fragment, and that the real fragment is the completed Part, while the completed two parts

of "Faust" are but the fragment of a fragment. The course of the poem runs thus : it begins perfect, grows to imperfection, and ends in a kind of self-annihilation, doubly discordant and dissevered. The poet, too, in the utter perversity of his nature, calls his complete work a fragment, and his fragment a complete Part, and his two fragments, doubly scattered, his complete work. Truly the saying of ancient Hesiod, that the half is more than the entire thing, has now become a reality, nay, a twofold reality, for the fragment is the whole, and the whole is the fragment.

In such manner certain sets of German critics seem to have turned the Faust poem upside down, and are attempting to read the book that way ; while Father Goethe himself is set on his head, and is asked to walk somehow with feet in the air. They call it the layer theory, inasmuch as "Faust" is not taken as a grand architectural work, but a series of stratified scenes, piled like stones one on top of another, which the critical mattock can pry apart and scale off into pieces large and small. Of course the divisive process need not and will not stop at any given point short of infinity : if we can split the completed work into two or four portions, why not into a dozen, and so on, according to the endless divisibility of matter ? Schröer has taken hold of the Margaret episode, the most closely connected part of all "Faust," in this spirit, and has divided it into two distinct portions, with still further subdivision into

separate pictures, moving one after another in a sort of panoramic fashion. Upon which procedure one observation may be made: anatomy is absolutely necessary for all true critical, as well as physiological science; but the whole purpose and end of it is, not to leave the scattered parts lying about at random, but to recombine them into the one complete living conception of the bodily or poetic organism.

It is curious to observe that the discussion on "Faust" seems to be running parallel to that on another great poetical book, the first Literary Bible, old Homer. The unity of both is torn to shreds; the notion of unity seems the reddest of red rags to the present infuriated critical bull, wildly laying about itself in Germany. It is bent desperately on fighting the fact, on proving by a violent toss of the horns that the fact is not the fact, but some other ghost. The unity of the *Iliad* was the prime fact of it, with few slight protests, ancient and modern, up to the time of Wolff, — the fact which gave it quite its chief worth, and which preserved it through so many centuries. Yet we have lived to see a German critic arrange the *Iliad* anew into a number of disparate songs, according to the principle of discord, and not of unity; as if the supreme object of criticism were to turn all the harmonies of the earth back into chaos and old night. The next thing will be an edition of "Faust," not in the well-ordered unity in which the poet left it, but dislocated by the lever of the critic, and stratified anew according to his method of its origin. Tear down the

grand Gothic cathedral, pile up the stones in layers ; then we have the thing as it was originally, in the womb of Mother Earth, and our brilliant critical sagacity finds its true outcome in the realm of primeval disorder.

Thus, however, has the critic furnished in himself the best commentary on the poem ; by his denial he has come to exemplify in his own person the denial of Faust ; he is transformed to a Faust denying Faust, through the very excess of study and shrewdness. It is indeed strange. One asks, What can the sceptical understanding not do ? The world turns to haze, without solidity ; the last book of the ages is getting to be as mythically uncertain as the first ; and Goethe, scarce fifty years in his grave, whom many hundreds of people now living have seen and remember, is beginning to be a fable, and to share already the fate of his eldest brother, the Chian bard.

Such is the one line of Faust criticism, much maintained in Germany ; yet even there it has valiant opponents, who meet the enemy at every point with huge stones and sharp javelins. This new school may be regarded as a necessary reaction against the excesses of the philosophical school, which was too often inclined to build an air-palace of its own, with little foundation in the poem. It is, however, itself committing excesses which foretell its doom ; Germany will weary of it, as she wearied of the earlier criticism, and will return to seek for the rational idea of the work, the idea which generates it, and is not foisted

upon it. The facts which the great industry and microscopic acuteness of the new criticism have brought to light will not be lost, but will be united in a new and deeper synthesis with the thought of the poem. The only sound method is to accept the facts fully and sincerely, then to see them in their completeness, which brings them into a connected, indeed creative whole. And the prime fact is, Goethe has left this "Faust" as a unity, arranged according to an idea, not by chance, or by mere chronological sequence. This guiding idea which orders the poem must always be the main thing for the one who wishes to comprehend, and not merely enjoy, the work.

Still, as Nature often reveals her secret in her monstrosities, it is worth while to see the ground of this new layer theory. There is a difference between the part of "Faust" which appeared in 1790, and the added part which appeared in 1808. The difference exists, but the deeper fact is the unity which locks together these different parts. In the Fragment the problem is stated; in the completed Faust it is solved. But many cannot see the solution; many, too, believe that there is no solution; these must prefer the Fragment. Such minds will always divide the First Part of "Faust" into two parts, and select their favorite: individual character and insight at last determine the choice. But the poet had certainly a different view, and if we wish to work in his spirit, we must follow the way he points, and grapple with the work till it yield its secret solvent thought.

If the new criticism must prove unsatisfactory, nay, in its extreme tendency, repugnant, to those who wish to see the poem as Goethe saw it and left it, that same criticism has been very beneficial in turning a strong light upon the essential and most difficult fact in the work, namely, the genesis of Mephisto. It has compelled those of us who believe in the Faust poem rather than in the Faust fragment to look into the great book anew, under a keener light, and to find the unity in a deeper sense than it has yet been found. I believe that the poem comes out of these critical fires more fully appreciated, seen in clearer, greater, truer outlines, than was possible without such discipline.

The genesis of Mephisto, which lies between the first denial and the final compact, may be well called the grand central fact of the poem ; it was, however, the grand obstacle to the poet, — was that which he had to wait for nearly forty years, from youth to the beginning of old age. What was his own development during that time in its cardinal points ? If we can bring them together in our glance, perhaps we may be able to see the spiritual history of the genesis aforesaid, or some suggestion thereof. Out of what and into what did the poet have to pass, before he could write that wonderful evolution of the modern Devil ? As early as 1769, possibly earlier, he had in him the Denial of Faust seen in the first soliloquy ; then or not long afterward he had the full-formed Mephisto in activity with the Student and with Margaret ; what

connection between the Denial and the Devil? The young poet feels that the one is the source of the other, that the one must be generated out of the other; but he possessed no literary form adequate for such a task, nor could he get it from any quarter, — with good reason, for the literature of the world as yet contained no such literary form. Genetic hints do indeed occur in Shakespeare, even in old Homer; but they are sudden flashes, prophecies of the coming form, by no means developed into an explicit procedure. Goethe then not merely must have the new thought, but must find the new form; he has to live it into being along with his life. This creation of a new literary form is what makes "Faust" an original poem, and its appearance an epoch in the world's literature.

Such was the difficulty which rose up against the continuation of Faust; yet the same difficulty lies in the entire period of Goethe's early poetic activity, that period usually called his Titanism. He began a "Prometheus," the world's accepted type of Titanic struggle, but he never could finish it; he ran against the obstacle which stopped his "Faust." Two other works, "Mahomet" and "The Wandering Jew," conceived in the same spirit, had to remain fragments for the same reason. He began a novel, "Wilhelm Meister"; but, with all the external incitement of friends, he could not bring it to an end, because the end lay not in him. He broke with his Titanism, saw that it would bring nothing to a close but itself; still, like the huge boulders of some mighty primi-

tive energy, the fragments of these early efforts lie scattered through several portions of his works. The fine poem called "*Ilmenau*" (1783) indicates the transition; it shows the break with the past, with the period of "*Storm and Stress*," and also hints the unsettled state of the future.

Still the poet was growing, growing into this very genetic method. He had begun to study science in his way, to take long deep glances into Nature, the first and last of his teachers. He discovered the intermaxillary bone in man, not by scientific induction so much as by poetic intuition, — that vision which beholds, not the particular thing or fact in isolation, but the total creative process, of which this is but a link. The glance which sees in the particular thing or fact the entire cycle of Nature — sees in the single bone the whole skeleton of the one animal and of all animals — is Goethe's glance, penetrating the genetic procedure of the physical world, and hinting from afar a kindred literary procedure.

But this last stage has not yet arrived, — indeed, cannot yet arrive; he makes the transition into Art by a new mighty experience. This is the journey to Italy, the most important epoch of his life, falling almost midway between his birth and death, when he was old enough to understand fully the lesson of the past world, young enough still to be moulded by that lesson. At once the fermentation began to settle, the soul to purify itself, and he reached a new harmonious insight into the world-order, and into the

expression thereof; he became a new man, looking upon a new world; all that had been impeded and was incomplete in his life and works now began to move toward freedom and completeness. The influence was a new birth of the whole man: Nature, Life, Art, Poetry, all felt the fresh creative breath of that Italian spring.

First, the vegetable world revealed itself to him in Italy, he says, in a garden at Palermo, where he fully saw that wonderful metamorphosis in which the leaf generates itself, and in that genetic process purifies itself more and more into higher forms, till at last it completes itself in the total plant. That little book, called "*The Metamorphosis of Plants*," written after his return from Italy, showing all the stages of the genesis of the plant from the leaf, is still Nature's grand suggestion of the genesis of Mephisto, and remains to this day the best guide to a true insight into the genesis of "*Faust*," — the book itself being a poem, a genetic drama of the plant. In like manner he showed the metamorphosis of the vertebral into the cranial bones, and carried the genesis of forms through the animal world. A great, many-sided activity he unfolded, yet with one thought at bottom; that thought was genesis, which became his conscious principle; he saw it everywhere in Nature, looked for it in Art, and in the history of Art, and intended to apply it universally in his great work on Man and Nature, of which, however, but a few outlines remain.

Already in Italy this spiritual metamorphosis began to pass into the literary works which he took with him to that country. "Iphigenie" from a prose drama was transformed into an ideal example of classic beauty, — a veritable symbol of Goethe's own transformation under Italian skies. "Tasso" was also transformed and rewritten in the same classic spirit and measure. A new world had indeed dawned upon him ; or it was rather the transfiguration of the old world into a new existence.

Of necessity he began to employ his new insight in a higher realm, that of spiritual production, of which the first great literary fruit after his return was the completion of "Meister's Apprenticeship." We have seen how that work lay unfinished before the Italian journey ; no completeness was possible in it then, as there was no completeness in the author. But now he sees the way, he will remodel the whole work, and bring it to an end ; Meister too is to reveal the genetic hint, and carry it over into the novel, and therewith into the spiritual world, out of Nature, even into education. It is, indeed, the principle of human life and character ; the erring man is to be seen going through his process of self-purification, of self-correction of errors, the grand human discipline in the mastery of fate. "In every endowment lies the force to bring it to perfection," says the Abbé, who is the almost invisible Jupiter Olympius, hovering over this truly modern epic. The nature of Meister unfolds through manifold errors into its true being ; in him we watch

the genesis of a human soul out of its primordial germ into reality.

With the completion of the apprenticeship of Meister, the grand obstacle which stopped Goethe so many years was broken down; he had entered the paradise of supreme poetic creation. The great literary deed was done, yet not completely done; a literary expression had been found for one phase of the new idea applied to life; but there was still another phase, stronger, deeper, more universal. In Meister the function of error in the grand human discipline is told, turned over and over, and emphasized in a thousand varied forms; but now error is to deepen into denial, the unconscious mistake is to become conscious negation, — in fine, is to become the Devil. Therewith rises the new task, vaster, more desperate, more soul-cleaving; a gigantic task, which the poor mortal may well shun, — to call up and put into body the “spirit that denies,” the modern Destroyer. The negation of Truth, the intensified embodiment of all error, wandering, waywardness, the conscious Denial burning with a sulphurous torch, indeed, the very Devil, is now to unfold before our eyes into a reality, and to accompany the man through his long earthly career, till he work himself free of his diabolic counterpart, purify himself, and ascend to heaven.

The task has to be done: there is no escape of the true poet from his call. Scarcely had he finished “Meister,” when the mightier problem seized hold of him, the final ground and mystery of all creation, the

genesis of evil. Yet this problem, so new, was nevertheless his oldest poetic task, had indeed lurked underneath all his activity since his twentieth year, had sent him to Nature for lessons, had driven him to Italy for expression and clarification, had made him write "Meister" for training; this Faust question is really the spiritual substrate of Goethe's entire productivity, the mother soil out of which shoot up all his works and his life. In 1797-98 the Prologues were written, in which we see him deep in his work; and we catch, from his correspondence with Schiller, faint indications that the embryonic Mephisto was lustily struggling within him.

But it is not a matter which can be despatched with a few rapid pen-strokes. Still a ten years' struggle, O valiant man! awaits thee; untold birth-throes will wrench thy being till thou be delivered of Satan, who will himself, "the old hell-lynx," be made to sweat roundly in the process (*ihr habt mich weidlich schwitzen machen*). Let no lack of man's recognition put down the God who now commands the work; rouse thyself anew; the years of long preparation are past; the hair on thy temples has turned gray since the first early conception of thy task, but it lives in thee still; thou hast travelled all the realms of Nature, Life, Art, in thy toilsome apprenticeship, and written its record; but now it is done. Thy supreme effort must be made, thy genius is invoking thee to exorcise the Devil out of thy "Faust," and out of thyself into the world, and by thy magic speech to ban him into writ,

there to stay forever. Then thou art free, but not till more than eighty years have passed over thy head, and the last line be set down ; then thou mayst dismiss thyself from thy terrestrial task, and say to thine Ariel, "Now to the elements."

XII.

GOETHE'S WOMEN.

BY MRS. JULIA WARD HOWE.

THE topic here set down to my name was assigned me months ago, and appeared at the time one most congenial to my wishes. Goethe's women! how charming to renew my acquaintance with them! What a lovely literary pleasure to take up the magical volumes, and to go again through the varied narratives in which they play their part! Vain thought! I had my Goethe-time long ago, when as a girl I read "Faust," "Götz von Berlichingen," and others of the plays, and when, a young mother, I quieted a baby with one hand, while the other turned over the pages of "Wilhelm Meister;" and so my Goethe Gallery is seen through a long vista of years. I, too, who once adored the Teuton rule, do so no longer. Heaven forbid that my grandchildren should be fed upon the tonic of "blood and iron"! Give me American rule, American training, with its lapses even and its faults. For, though Germany did wonderfully take the lead in critical thought during the first half of this century, when the moment came for

liberal action, she shrank away, and lost the world's leadership, and will never regain it. And how did her Nemesis, Bismarck, obtain the mastery over her daring thought and unrepentant speculation? Let me grimly parody, in reply, a line of Robert Browning:—

“Just for a handful of silver he had us;
Just for a ribbon to stick on our coat.”

Having said thus much, and refusing to bow to a cocked hat, even if worn by a German Prince and set up by a German Emperor, I will look back at the social and literary glories which once illuminated two hemispheres from the narrow heaven of a small German principality.

Coming, at so late a date, into this Goethe symposium, I must fear more than ever to touch upon ground already occupied by those who have preceded me. One who speaks of Goethe's Women must needs speak of the man Goethe, of “Faust,” of “Wilhelm Meister,” and of much besides. And I avail myself of the title of the theme given me to speak, not only of the women whom Goethe has brought into the world of literature, but also of those who were known and prized by him. From the living gallery of his friends to the marble gallery of his fancies, we may step in true progress. Or might I rather say, that we may find the beautiful forms of his imagination to be as like to those cherished in his affections, as the trees on the bank are to the trees in the river, — only that, like the clear stream,

the master's mind adds to their beauties a glory of its own?

The real women in the first place, and the Mother first of all, — characterized by that substantial value which belongs to a class that neither cringes nor aspires. We must thank the Germans for many words; and may go into their language to help our own, just as a child may go into its grandmother's store-closet to commit a theft which his mother would not leave unpunished. The word I have in mind at this time is *bürgerlich*, which, taken strictly, corresponds to *bourgeois* in French, and to "upper-middle-class" in English. The German term, however, seems to make a stand for itself. The French *bourgeois* has a little sarcastic tang, which Molière gave it. "Upper-middle-class" is rather hopelessly suggestive of caste and confusion. But *bürgerlich*, burgherlike, brings to our mind those substantial mediævals who were rich enough to afford a velvet doublet and a gold chain, — who could lend the Court money, but who would not borrow manners from it. So Goethe's mother was *bürgerliche*, although beloved of princes, not only for her son's, but for her own sake; with great manners and her gold snuff-box for great days, but with a simple and genuine love of life, its real duties and real values. How naïve and kindly is her anxiety that the cakes to be served at her funeral shall be rich and good enough for the occasion! She does not appreciate the Frau von Staël, and Goethe did not either. Yet

she is a woman poetical in sentiment and rich in feeling.

The sister, Cornelia, the dear companion of Goethe's youth, the confidante of his first literary schemes and aspirations, was a young girl whose plainness of person made her self-distrustful, but whose character, to those capable of divining it, revealed an inner beauty to which the outer charm would have seemed superfluous.

The lady-loves, so numerous, — often succeeding each other without an interval between the old love and the new, — how worthy do they for the most part appear in what is known of them! Each has her individual charm. The first, Frederika Brion, is a blooming rustic. The second, Lotte, is a girl in higher position, gay and sedate by turns, the betrothed of Goethe's friend, who bitterly resents the portraiture of both given to the world in "*Werther*." The third, fourth, and fifth, Anna, Sibylla, and Maximiliane, are less known to us. The sixth, Lili, is a city belle, the daughter of a wealthy banker, and something of a coquette. She was the inspirer of some of the poet's best-known lyrics, such as,

"Heart, my heart, what is this feeling
That doth weigh on me so sore?"

Of her inspiring, too, was the poem entitled "*Lili's Menagerie*," in which, says Lewes, "he expresses his surly disgust at the familiar faces which surround her," — the Bear of the menagerie being a portrait of

himself. Goethe follows her about to scenes of uncongenial gayety, in braided coat, gazing at her "amid the glare of chandeliers." In his conversations with Eckermann, he calls her his first, last, and only love, all others in comparison deserving only to be classed as inclinations. When he says of this affection, "It has influenced my style," he pays her the utmost tribute that a literary man can offer to a woman. He loves, but marries not. The first attractions find him precocious in feeling, and mature enough in judgment to distrust himself. It costs him bitter tears to forsake his sweethearts. We can imagine that the tears shed by them must have been more bitter, and cannot put out of sight the disadvantage suffered by these young girls, when, after every appearance of serious intention, the brilliant youth flits from them, and leaves them in (to say the least) awkward isolation. The fact that he did so leave them reminds me of a humorous device in Offenbach's "Orphée aux Enfers." Jupiter, wishing to make love to Pluto's fair bride, descends in the form of a monstrous butterfly, and presently hands forward his card, saying, "Je suis le Baron de Jupiter." The great Goethe, on the contrary, comes like a lord and departs like a butterfly.

In the judgments which this unedifying course has drawn upon him, Goethe is often blamed as though he had been throughout a free and voluntary agent. This is not a fair reading of the matter. Goethe in his youth was subject to all the complications which

result from the conflict between temperament and those "circumstances over which we have no control," that would seem to be a convenient invention of modern times. The wishes of his parents—strong and determined people—would naturally be present to his mind in anything of so much moment as a matrimonial alliance. From Frederika he seems to have been parted by a sense of the unfitness of the relation,—responding to the remonstrances of his friend Merck. With Lili he exchanged the kiss of betrothal, and soon after, at the instance especially of his sister, thought better of it, and never saw her more until the heads of both were gray. But now he goes to Court, and beholds the great ladies of the day. One of these, the Frau von Stein, becomes his Muse, and for ten years holds him in her vassalage. The relation between them, though an intimate one, seems to have escaped scandal; Frau von Stein having held a position of much respect in the society of the day, and having no doubt preserved through all excitements the strictest sense of the *convenances*, and of the penalty of their violation. The Frau von Stein is known to have been intellectual in her tastes and elegant in her accomplishments. For the length of time already mentioned she remained a guiding luminary in Goethe's heaven, the confidante of his thoughts, his sentiments, and his literary projects.

In his fortieth year, he met the woman who was destined to be the mother of his only child, and the

companion of his later years. This was Christiane Vulpius, a woman of poor descent, inheriting from an unworthy father only the curse of a morbid appetite for intoxicating liquors. Lewes, in his *Life of Goethe*, finds much to say in explanation of a course of conduct which cost the great Master much of his social prestige, and robbed him forever of the friendship of Frau von Stein. "Christiane had," says Lewes, "quick mother-wit, a lively spirit, a loving heart, and great aptitude for domestic duties." Madame Schopenhauer describes her as endowed with "golden brown locks, laughing eyes, kiss-provoking lips, a small and gracefully rounded figure," and likens her in appearance to a youthful Bacchus. The "*Roman Elegies*" record Goethe's feeling for her, while the fact that he partly wrote for her his invaluable "*Metamorphoses of Plants*" shows her to have been possessed of an education sufficient to enable her to share some of his studies. The *liaison*, which must have begun soon after their first acquaintance, in 1788, led, eighteen years later, to a marriage, at which their son, already eighteen years of age, was present. To this son, born in 1789, the Duke August had stood as godfather,—an act which shows that, although disapproved, the connection with Christiane was not ruinous to Goethe's court favor.

Bettine von Arnim we may mention as a gracious episode of Goethe's later life,—an evening star on the edge of his sunset glory. Like the evening star, she

shows herself, and presently "fades in the light that she loves." Of great romantic interest in the social history of the time, Bettine does not much avail us in the present connection, for it does not appear that she exerted any influence over Goethe's literary life. One other woman we may name, Fräulein von Lenzow, whose beauty, spiritual or personal, smote the ancient heart even in extreme old age, and, provoking to no unseemly act of folly, called forth the "Elegie aus Marienbad."

I have called to mind very briefly some of the women who are known to have had an influence upon Goethe's life, because they are sure to have had some share in the parentage of that ideal family from which his fame in great measure derives. I am not able, however, to trace out the traits and features which might make this relationship evident. His biographers have already done this, — none better, perhaps, than Lewes.

If we compare Goethe's method with those most in favor with us to-day, we shall be impressed above all with its generosity. In the line of this comparison, I first think of the great English masters, Dickens and Thackeray. From them my mind turns to the works of two of my own countrymen, Messrs. Howells and James. All of these writers have satirized women. In all of them, to my mind, though not in all to the same extent, the points remarked upon are petty, and the inferred damage to character, to say the least, disproportionate. Literary women

sometimes show the same, or even a greater, uncharity toward their own sex. An especial example of this I find in the volume called "*Modern Women*," of which the authorship is attributed to a lady well known in both hemispheres as a writer of fiction. Shall we say that these are truths which wound in the telling, but which should nevertheless be told? Methinks it is the low interpretation of character and of life that wounds. Good surgery works for mitigation, not for mutilation. Cynical writers take from us our left arm of faith and our right arm of courage. They take from us the swift feet of sympathy, which would serve humanity, were not humanity represented as not worth serving nor caring for.

Goethe has shown us in his writings some very poorly behaved women, and has shown them without a word of reprobation. Marianne and Philine, in "*Wilhelm Meister*," are of this class,—characters which no one would dare to present in English literature so baldly as Goethe has presented them in the phraseology of his mother tongue. Martha, in "*Faust*," is vile, and Gretchen trebly criminal. Where is generosity shown in these very literal renderings of women whose life and standard are low? I find that in these, as in his higher creations, Goethe does not lose sight of the ideal value of human life and character. Philine is redeemed through maternity. We see her at last presented to a noble lady, to whom she avows the commonplace level of her intel-

lectual aspirations, but says, on the other hand, "I love my husband and my children," and so passes unreprieved. Marianne is a sketch left much in shadow; yet she wins our human sympathy when we dimly see her dying of grief for a lover whom she deserved to lose, but whose loss left her inconsolable.

But all these melancholy pictures fade before the piteous pathos of Gretchen, — Gretchen, the simple peasant maiden, who knows no harm, and means no harm to any one. On her way from church, to which she went "full of innocence," the Devil sets his snare for her. The handsome gallant, urged forward by the fiend, touches her imagination. "Wer mag der Herr seyn?" A great gentleman to her, — ay, and in himself a deeply philosophic man, with an exquisite sense even of the beauty of the innocence against which he sins. Goethe does not spare one horror from the tale of what befalls her. The low, stupid misery in which she cowers in the straw, her dim reason presenting the past to her in an intangible shape, — nothing real to her but her helpless loneliness, her forsaken condition, and the hangman and gallows waiting for her. This agonizing story is portrayed with the greatest mastership. The guileless soul of the girl who relates to Faust how she brought up her baby sister, how the little cradle stood ever by her bed, how many a weary hour the little nursling cost her :

"Doch schmeckt dafür das Essen, schmeckt die Ruh."

How touching her catechism of Heinrich, as Faust has taught her to call him !

GRETCHEN.

Now say how does it stand with thy religion ?
Thou art indeed a heartily good man,
Only of that, I fear me, thou art careless.

FAUST.

Let that alone, my child ; thou know'st I love thee,
And for my loves will give my life and blood, —
Would steal from none his altar and his creed.

GRETCHEN.

That's not the right thing yet, one must believe.

FAUST.

Must one ?

GRETCHEN.

Thou honorest not the holy sacrament.
Dost thou believe in God ?

FAUST.

Sweet, who dares say,
"I believe in God" ? Ask thou the priest, the sage,
Their answer seems to mock the questioner.

And the tragedy of her swoon in the cathedral, and of the bitter thoughts which precede it:—

"How different, Gretchen, was 't with thee
When blameless thou this altar didst approach,
From the clasped missal lisping prayers,
Half childish play, half God in thy young heart !
How swims thy head ! what misdeeds in thy thought !"

In nothing has Goethe shown more power than in this unique portraiture. A peasant girl, as he must

have known them, led away, destroyed, ruined, as he must have seen them, alas! too often,—the moral of this story needs no pointing. Even Hood's "Think of it, dissolute man," would be an impertinence. To womankind it almost seems to say: "If God so clothe with womanhood the very grass of the field, what should you women be who grow up in honor, safety, and knowledge?"

But why should we linger with this poor child in her dismal prison, when we can climb with the master to such heights of noble imagination? Let us admire, first of all, the breadth of view which includes so simple and forlorn a creature, and her very opposite, the woman who sits in her bower to trace out the silver embroidery of the heavens, Macaria the blessed! We may say that this revelation did not come to the great master all at once. Already in "Götz," his earliest work, the later performance is foreshadowed. Adelheid, the beautiful, corrupt woman, Elizabeth, the strong and simple one, are drawn with mastery, albeit they are only touched in. But the Goethe series would properly begin with Charlotte, a conventional type, if a charming one. She is *bürgerliche*, *bourgeoise*, of that sort which is as good as anything. No trace in her of the defrauded duchess, of the woman who condescends to live her life, holding her merits and pretensions far above her sphere. She takes her fate as she finds it, is conscientious in the cutting of bread and butter, intends to make a good wife to her prosaic husband, and,

though unavoidably touched by Werther's devotion to her, and for a moment stirred by it from her mental equilibrium, is sure to regain her peace of mind, and to end her days worthily and happily, as is best. In George Sand's handling, the *dénouement* might have been far different. "Werther," like Rousseau's "Héloïse," gives one cause to reflect upon the changes which make the great romance of one period appear tame and dull in another.

In Goethe's greatest drama, "Faust," and in his greatest romance, "Wilhelm Meister," the artist cuts deep down into the quick of simple, natural passion, always with a high handling and intent. He gives us, too, the conventional glimpses of character which society affords, — the actress, who vainly loves Wilhelm's caustic friend, Jarno; the lady sketched in as stopping at the inn, and reaching home late on her birthday; the little family celebration of it, spoiled by the delay, but still more by the jealous anger which steals her soul away; her faithless lover being present to her mind, while her unloved husband moves before her eyes, scarcely noticed. But before we pass so far, Mignon stays our way, pathetic, like Gretchen, an estray, orphaned by the unspeakable crime of her parents, but with the instincts of a higher race, aspiring heavenward in her loneliness and desolation, her melancholy a sweet, angelic minor, that ends with a rising cadence. The song, "Kennst du das Land?" is like some magical crystal ball, held in the hand, but in which one sees

visions of things far distant. Mignon gives us all Italy in that one beautiful crystallization, — the blooming thickets, the gleaming fruit, the soft air, the mountain passes, the ancestral halls rich in sculptures. Who can show us so much in so little? Only a magician, — and he puts his wonder-ball in the hand of a child.

“Die Schöne Seele,” the fair soul, is a Protestant saint of a type not unfamiliar in Goethe’s time, — not often seen nor much favored in our own day. The absorbing power of religious enthusiasm, divorcing youth and beauty from the gay and busy world, and turning the sweet, pure eyes all to the contemplation of things transcending human sense, — this portraiture is a very strong and perfect one. But religion in our day is not interpreted after this ascetic fashion. Nature and she embrace with one hand, and aspire with the other. I need not here enlarge upon this fortunate change. The reaction from mediæval forms of devotion is too well known to need illustration at my hand. Let us, however, think of this, — that Goethe thought this now obsolete type worth preserving in his glorious work. And let us question whether we cannot have the singleness of heart, the unquestioning conscience, of his Schöne Seele, without that technical sundering from social ties and interests which she received as the commandment of Heaven, but against which we of to-day must rebel. Piety of this sort is to-day called Pietism, and stands upon a level with other *isms*.

Casting about in my mind for a *schöne Seele* of our own time, I see before me the thoughtful eyes and spirit-pure face of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. Single and devout is she, and somewhat withdrawn from the world, and yet such a Nature-friend that the heaven which she loves to picture is full of human delights, translated out of excess, out of selfishness, out of danger. In it the good are holy, harmless, and heavenly forever, but are human withal, as Christ was human.

Macaria, darling of the gods, to whom are whispered the secrets of the universe, sees in the starry heavens the path and power of each distant luminary, and builds sublimely in her own brain the plan of the Master Architect through whom it all came to be. Having had acquaintance once with an eminent astronomer, and knowing, as every one knows, that the study of astronomy involves much laborious calculation, as well as the keenest observation, I asked him what Goethe could have meant by drawing the portrait of a woman who knew all these wonders by intuition. He replied, "There is no understanding what a man like Goethe meant by much that he wrote, and this with the rest." But I find something intelligible even in this mystic description. Goethe's feeling of the intuitive power of women was a very strong one. He may have added to it a moment's trifling with the somnambulic phenomena which Swedenborg and other mystics had already introduced to the world. The intuitive power of woman is indeed

precious to society ; and one of the great fears which accompany the advance of the sex in rationalistic and purely intellectual discipline, is the dread lest in the drill of their new acquisitions they should lose this distinctive and invaluable trait. I need not here take up this matter either, but I will say, as I said before, "Goethe thought this work suggestive." We therefore may ponder upon it.

Two poems of Goethe's, "Der Gott und die Bajadin," and "Die Braut von Corinth," breathe the fullness of youthful passion, unrestrained by the critical after-thought which makes the great poet appear even greater in the anatomy of human feeling than in its expression. In both of these poems we feel the reaction against the pietistic and exclusive ethic which must often have appeared to Goethe in the light of a Pharisaic tyranny not to be endured.

Mahadöh, lord of earth, visits the Dancing-girl, who greets him as a stranger with smiling hospitality. Of the god the poet says :

"If he judge or if he share,
Manlike he with man must fare."

And so the divine visitor sees beneath the painted cheek a gentle nature, and smiles to find,

"In deepest perdition, a womanly heart."

He becomes her guest, her master, her spouse. Waking from her dream of wedded bliss, she finds him dead. Those who bear him to his funeral pyre deny her the widow's precious right, to be burned

with her husband ; but she, leaping into the flames, is caught in his embrace, and carried to the region of the Immortals. This story illustrates the passive religion of the Hindoo woman.

In early Christendom, a youth betrothed to a young girl in Corinth journeys thither from his distant home and claims the hospitality of the house to which he stands thus related. Here, in the deep of night, he is visited by a vampire, the ghost of his betrothed, who has met death in a convent to which her mother's vows had consigned her on recovery from a dangerous illness. Surprised by the mother, the fatal, horrible visitor touches us by this piteous appeal :

“ Hearken, mother, now my latest prayer,
And a sexton send who shall be my friend,
And my narrow, wretched home uncloze.
Bring in flames the loving to repose !
When the spark shall show,
When the ashes glow,
To the old-time deities we 'll go.”

“The Erl King” is the only poem of Goethe's which offers itself to my mind as having the same terrific suggestion and horror as are found in this composition. Its horror, however, is mystical and pathetic, condensed from the shadows and chills of evening deepening into night, while the Bride is seen by flashes of vivid lightning whose accompanying thunder shakes, with the primeval forces of Nature, the foundations of the new, aspiring Faith.

The climax of Goethe's *guneology* — you will allow me this word — is reached in the concluding sentence

of "Faust," — "Das Ewig-Weibliche zieht uns hinan," "The Eternal Womanly attracts us, draws us on." The gravity of the nominative here seems to ask a grave interpretation of the verb. *Anziehen* literally means "to draw on," metaphorically means "to attract." Let us give it the weight of both meanings, and interpret it as expressing the attraction which indeed draws or leads us on. This wonderful phrase has been often quoted, and much dwelt upon. As the last word of a mighty life-drama, — a drama whose intense interest holds the world wherever presented to-day, — we are glad to find in it a deep meaning. After the chorus of the angels, and the visitation of the Demon, after daring speculation and more daring sin, after the vanity of imagination, after the substantiality of possession, comes the final voice, "Das Ewig-Weibliche."

It might seem strange if people of our dimensions should feel it incumbent upon them to apologize for anything that a mighty man like Goethe did or said. Still is it one of the meekening reflections belonging to our race, that the greatest of men (could we give one that rank) cannot be rightly judged without the tenderness of human charity. Goethe's unjustifiable treatment of his early loves, his unjustifiable relation with the mother of his boy, — these are matters that call for charitable judgment. And I find the world more bound to charity to-day than heretofore, on account of the improved methods of analysis which belong to our later thought and culture. Phrenology

and the study of heredity enable the analyst of human nature in our time to trace the effects of leading characteristics more fully and subtly than was possible in earlier times, in which divisions were more crude and absolute.

The power of Goethe's imagination in matters personal to himself is shown in the circumstance that the mere anticipation of a first meeting with Frau von Stein cost him three sleepless nights. What impossible perfections he expected to find in her, we can hardly conjecture, — prosaic creatures that we are, who would not lie awake one night for any presentation that can be imagined! This vivid imagination, we must think, would have been apt to lend its brilliant coloring to the encounters of a first acquaintance. Its ecstasy, though supreme, would necessarily be short-lived. Onward, onward, would this flying steed bear its rider, who is not always its master. So the enchantment of one personage would vanish with the enchantment of the surrounding scene. The scene, the personage, remain: the flying one, whose nature it is to fly, has gone.

Of his strangely delayed marriage we may conjecture that the scandal occasioned by the relation preceding it was much less than would have been, at the time, that of a marriage so unequal and unsuitable. Goethe, the world-man, had, no doubt, respect to this consideration. Years pass on, — years of faithful affection and service on the part of his companion. The power of the hearth and home has grown

supreme with him. Troubles gather around him, — troubles in which Christiane's better qualities have afforded him real comfort and support. He determines to give the dignity of wifehood to the woman around whom have centred the tender and intimate associations of nearly twenty years. Even with these grave reasons behind it, the marriage causes loud and instant blame. Goethe's friends, however, were glad of it, and Christiane's conduct, we are told, confirmed their approbation of the step.

The modern theory of imagination is that all quick and fine perception is in a great degree dependent upon it. We must think Goethe in this respect most exceptionally gifted. In the wide range of female character which his works unfold to us, this perception of the beautiful impresses me as the trait most characteristic of him. The exquisite tenderness and simplicity of his Gretchen, so unstrained, so true to nature, shows the wonderful sense with which he looked upon the lowliest creatures. Egmont's Clärchen has the same pathos, though not the same character. Gretchen's sweet soul makes itself felt through the poverty of her speech, which is narrow and all peasant-like. Clärchen is city-bred, and has the gift of expression : —

“Freudvoll und leidvoll,
Gedankenvoll seyn ;
Himmel hoch jauchzend,
Zum Tode betrübt :
Glücklich allein
Ist die Seele, die liebt.”

Of this simple womanhood he has also given us a charming picture in that dialogue which brings before us a man of high culture, who, among the ruins of some ancient fane or city, encounters a mother with her infant child. He muses of the past, and of all the great "may have beens." The woman can tell him nothing of all this, has no talisman with which to call up visions of centuries long vanished. But her baby wakes, and she speaks to him the language of all time : —

"Hat es geschlafen, liebes Herz !"

And this brings a ray of purest light serene into the sombre picture.

Equally at home is he with high dames, — with Leonora of Este, Tasso's beloved, — with the calm, sweet daughter of Agamemnon.

This sense of beauty, then, clothes the Goethean world with varied glories. It is universal, in shadow as in light. It lifts the depths of human nature into the daylight of God's providence. To its fine interpretation, nothing is absolutely common, nothing is hopelessly unclean. Nor is this a mere worship of what may delight the outer senses. The value of the beautiful, in form, in character, and in life, — this deep and steadfast persuasion goes with our poet from his first work to his last. Deeply Christian is this trait, for it is the combination of the three foremost graces of Christianity, Faith, Hope, and Charity.

An intense sense of the pleasurable accompanied this keen perception of all beauties. The expression of this, here and there, has led many to think of Goethe as an Epicurean, in the least worthy interpretation of the term. He belongs, on the contrary, if to the sect at all, to its high philosophic order. This view will, in all probability, have been sufficiently presented and considered in this philosophic company. I need not dwell upon the love of scientific observation and research which eminently placed him with the great dignitaries of the sect. But of his *eudaimonistic* temperament itself I have a word to say.

Pleasure-lovers are of two sorts, the self-engrossed and the benevolent. It is a narrow interpretation, even of enjoyment, which can regard it as a solitary good, in which the welfare of others has properly no part. I cannot for one moment think of Goethe as imprisoned in the fetters of this selfish greed, which grasps what others offer, snatches what they refuse, and exults in what it gathers, while it gives nothing. No, that serene nature must have been a light-diffusing one. Where he came, things took on at once a brighter aspect. The dull and trivial small change of society was redeemed in his hands to a genuine currency; the icicles of form and custom became living gems in his sunshine. He was a great *present* help and power, and his literary legacies, precious as they are, are poor in comparison with what it would have been to see him, to hear him, to feel his wonderful

magnetism for one half-hour. This great soul carried its great life with it, and made a paltry Ducal residence the literary centre of Continental Europe. Kings and conquerors did him homage. He, rendering respect and courtesy where they were due, paid homage only to truth.

The last scene comes. Is it still the Eternal Womanly? Not to laurel and crown does it call thee, Goethe! not to the princely court, the gay dames, the admiring world. All this thou hast had, as was thy right. Thou hast wrought in thy morning, and noontide, and evening. Night comes now, and brings thee rest. Like a little child on its mother's breast the great man sinks back on the bosom of the infinite love. The Eternal Womanly, the eternally loving, folds him to a slumber which, as we think of it, seems to still for a moment the heart of the world.

XIII.

GOETHE'S FAUST.

BY W. T. HARRIS.

WE have often heard that Shakespeare is to be regarded as the greatest of the world's literary men. Especially since Coleridge and Carlyle made known to us the analyses of the great literary critics and philosophers of Germany, this verdict has been gaining universal acceptance among English-speaking nations. The significance of this estimate of Shakespeare is not so easy to discover. Let any young person try to state wherein the great world-poets are so eminent above their fellows, and he may be led to change his opinion many times before he satisfies himself or us with the standard of criticism that he adopts. Is it the music of Shakespeare's verse, or the charm of his metaphor, or the interest of his situations, or the ideal suggestions of his words, or the conformity of his dramatic solutions to the desires and aspirations of the heart? No, it is not any one nor all of these things that would or could deserve the honor that is paid to Shakespeare, or Dante, or even Homer.

It is doubtless a great thing — far greater than the items mentioned — to have the poetical insight

that can see the spiritual significance of things, and express this by metaphor and personification. In proportion to the insight of the poet, he sees the correspondence between the visible and invisible, and invents new modes of expression for truth discerned internally. The great world-poets have this faculty in an eminent degree, but they share it with other great poets. Their place apart from and above the circle of great poets is due to something else than this eminent degree of insight into the spiritual correspondences in nature. To this insight they add what may be called an ethical insight, which may be more fully described as an intuitive knowledge of human life in its individual and social aspects. Shakespeare and Homer see in every deed its consequences to society, and the retroactive consequences upon the doer. We call such insight a knowledge of human nature, — a knowledge of life.

Given a human action, certain effects will follow. But this action has also presuppositions, and these the great poet sees as well as the consequences. He not only sees them, but presents them in their completeness. Shakespeare probed human experience to the bottom, and discovered one by one all of its presuppositions, and collected them and exhibited them to the spectator. Inasmuch as there is no isolated man, but each one is a member of society it is requisite to portray the status of society, in order to explain the particular deed of the individual. A common man acts in accordance with use and

wont, and follows without deviation the beaten track marked out for him by his fellows, — his immediate kinsmen and neighbors. The heroic character, with an eccentric orbit, collides with society and makes a theme for tragedy. In the portrayal of such collisions the ethical might of society and the dæmonic power of the individual come into clear relief, and furnish us opportunity to study social and ethical laws. For it is only when we feel the universality and necessity of a determination or characteristic that we truly know it.

While it satisfies the ordinary story-teller to relate the direct particulars of the collision of his hero, and these only, nothing will content Shakespeare but a complete presentation of all the accessories. His drama will so expound the action that we may see the antecedents which have furnished occasion, as well as all the concomitant reactions which accompany and follow it. A very small item being given, — by some Geoffrey of Monmouth, Holinshed, or Saxo Grammaticus, — Shakespeare proceeds to discover the world of presuppositions necessary to make that isolated item a piece of living reality. Given the small arc, and he computes the total circle; given the deed of Hamlet, or Cymbeline, or Macbeth, and forthwith he conjures up all the concrete relations, the Family, Society, and State, — the moral status of the individual, and his ethical interaction with the social condition in which he lives, and the subtle casuistry by which the hero directs his course.

An insight into the correspondence between nature and mind is the first requisite of a great poet; but an equal insight into the ethical relation of the individual to the social whole is the additional requisite. Without this second insight into human life, the poet cannot belong to the select circle of world-poets. He may "write poetry for poets," — as it is called, — with the former species of insight; but he cannot be a people's poet unless he sees the mediation of the individual with the institutions of the race. For while the individual acts in his own person, the social whole acts through institutions and through individuals set apart and endowed with representative might. No deed is isolated, all deeds are interdependent; only the totality of conditions enables us to comprehend the puniest act. See the part in the whole, and then you are able to see the reflection of the whole in the part.

This is not a doctrine of necessity and fatalism, as it might at first seem, but the true doctrine of freedom and moral responsibility. Freedom demands self-determination, — that the deed shall return upon its author, so that he shall receive its consequences. Now, human society, looked at closely, is an organism for this very purpose. The individual reflects society and is reflected by society. What he deals out to his neighbors comes back to him, in circles of greater or less circumference, according to the degree of generality in which he works. Through society in its industrial, domestic, and social aspects, this

reflection of his deed upon the doer is of an implicit character; in the State it is explicit; the State letting him go free when his deed does not infringe on the rights of society, but otherwise reflecting back his deed upon him in the inconvenient form of prison bars and hempen cords.

The deed must be shown in its relations in order to exhibit this reflection; the fewer relations, the less reflection and the less truth. Shakespeare excels all poets in the portrayal of this reflection of the deed upon the doer. It is not to be expected of a poet that he shall be conscious of his method, or of the logical process involved in the dramatic relations which he places before us. No artist should divide his attention between the abstract and the concrete in this manner. His best work he will accomplish from the instinct of his art. Shakespeare instinctively adopted his method of exhaustively reflecting and presenting the elements of a situation, and we doubt not he felt rather than thought that this and that accessory must be uttered and expressed, because it stood out in his creative imagination as essentially belonging to the representation of the deed.

The correspondence between spiritual being and nature renders possible the expression of what is seen as inward fact. All language has arisen through this first insight of the poet. The second insight of the poet has given us the ethical sentiments, the feeling of the solidarity of the individual with the social

whole. Slightly paraphrasing Shakespeare's language in "*Troilus and Cressida*": "Man, however richly he may be endowed, ["how dearly ever parted,"] however much he may possess in world's goods or intellectual acquirements, cannot make boast to have that which he hath, nor feels what he possesses but by reflection from the recognition of his fellow men; as when his virtues shining upon others heat them, and they retort that heat again to the first giver." This thought becomes the possession of mankind in an emotional form through the works of the world-poets.

As Orpheus is fabled to have built Thebes with the sound of his lyre, so each people has its Orpheus who has made a spiritual city for it. Although the great artist does not first think out his subject in a logical or philosophical form, and then proceed to clothe it in marble, in tones, or in rhymes and metre, yet his creative imagination seizes and fixes the shapes and forms which hover before it as typical expressions of his problem of life. For each person finds himself here involved in a "problem of life." Nevertheless, a work of art is not an allegory. It is rather, as Carlyle says, a phantasmagory embodying a many-sided meaning. When we analyze it, we may find logic and dialectic in it as well as in other objects, — or just as we find laws in unconscious nature.

Homer, the first great people's poet of the Western or European world, taught man to recognize in na-

ture the presence of the human spirit. The motions, sounds, and apparitions of the beings of nature express some desire or meaning of the invisible conscious beings who form the sphere of reality behind the visible world. But Homer reveals likewise human nature, both as heroic individual and also as representative of institutions, — the State and the Family. The glorious Achilles, the type of beautiful and powerful individuality, has to be subordinated to legally constituted authority, — to Agamemnon, who is endowed with the power of the nation: hence the song of Troy. The Family too is sacred as an institution, and the attack upon it by the hero Paris is the occasion of the war. Thus, by presenting to the Greeks the picture of their twofold nature, realized in beautiful individuality and in ethical might, Homer made his people conscious of themselves.

Dante, another great world-poet, has revealed human nature in its twofold aspect of religious life with individual life in conflict with it. The highest institution, the Church, when not corrupted by individuals who represent it temporarily, is the Celestial Paradise. From this highest institution descends to the institutions of the State and the Family a dispensation of authority which gives them religious superiority over the individual. By disregarding these institutions and finding his motives of action in his selfish passions, the individual falls into one or more of the seven mortal sins and finds the Inferno in the fullness of selfish gratification. Dante as a poet does

not so much make the revelation of the beautiful — Homer's function — as of the holy. He does not indicate the correspondences of nature which reveal the soul as finding free expression in matter, but, rather, the correspondences that emblem the struggle of the soul against its material environment, and its victory or defeat. Homer shows us the incarnation of the soul, while Dante shows us its resurrection. Shakespeare is the poet of society, not so much in its national aspect or religious aspect as in its free civil aspect.¹

It is left to the individual in civil society to take the initiative; he makes such combinations as he chooses, in view of his own welfare and the conditions about him. Acting in this unrestrained manner, the individual may come into collision with either institution, — the State, Church, or Family; or he may collide simply with the normal conditions of free civil activity. These conditions or laws of free civil combination, which rule the sphere of human activity in which the individual procures his food, clothing, shelter, amusement, and culture, are the written and unwritten laws of thrift, economics, morality, and courtesy, which in the aggregate make up social policy and insure success to the individual as his need. That mankind form a solid unit socially is the presupposition of Shakespeare, and it has become still more a conscious presupposition in an epoch of

¹ "Homer is the poet of the nation; Shakespeare, the poet of society; Goethe, the poet of the individual." H. C. Brockmeyer.

telegraphs, daily newspapers, and society novels. In Shakespeare there are no mere lay figures, but each one has a will of his own and a personal interest commensurate with his individuality. The world of Shakespeare, compared with that of Homer or Dante, is one of infinite details. But a unity is found for these details in the principle of reflection. The central event of the drama is reflected in each single movement or phase of movement in the drama. The great impending world-tragedy of the senate-house in Rome is reflected in the fantasy of plebeians, and their rumor reaches Cæsar on the fatal morning:

“Most horrid sights seen by the watch. . . .
 Graves have yawned, and yielded up their dead ; . . .
 Fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds, . . .
 Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol.”

The very elements reflect the premonitions in the minds of the people. So, too, around the castle at Inverness on the night of Duncan's murder:

“The heavens, as troubled with man's act,
 Threaten his bloody stage. . . .
On Tuesday last,
 A falcon, towering in her pride of place,
 Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed.
 And Duncan's horses, . . .
 Turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out. . . .
 . . . 'T is said they ate each other.”

When seemingly detached and indifferent details reflect the central action of the work of art, its unity is intensified to the highest degree. In Shakespeare we learn that the slightest word or deed of the man is

reflected back by the social environment, even when the organized institutions, the State, the Church, the Family, do not take cognizance of it.

In this line of world-poets comes Goethe as the fourth. His central thought is that of the mediation of the individual for himself. In his writings the great institutions appear in the background of the scene in their substantial might; but what especially interests Goethe is not the primary and immediate effect of the deeds of the individual, nor yet their secondary effect, the reaction of the institutions against those deeds, but the third phase, that of the formation of character in the individual, through his readjustment of his aims and purposes in view of the effect of his deeds. The growth of character through experience is not the direct and conscious theme of poetry before Goethe. Homer shows us the change of purpose in Achilles by reason of the reaction of his deeds upon himself. Dante shows how the reaction of deeds upon the personality forms an environment which may be of the Inferno, the Purgatory, or the Paradiso. The Purgatory shows growth of character through persistent will-power, but it does not descend from the type and symbol to the concrete every-day life. It constructs an artificial world beyond life, and concentrates the vices and virtues into single types. Shakespeare, on the other hand, deals with the very concrete itself, and furthermore does not exhibit the purgatorial stage, in which character is formed by persistent endeavor.

He shows the Inferno in its concretest form, — rarely the Paradiso. But while he is farther off than Dante from Goethe, in this matter of the omission of purgatory he is nearer in the fact that he approaches the problem of the individual in some of his tragedies, and especially in his "Hamlet." In a certain sense "Hamlet" is the prototype of the literature of the present. The problem of the individual is how to adjust himself to his time, or how "to set it right," if he is in advance of his time in any respect. But Shakespeare only states the problem, he does not solve it. He lets accident, weakness, or surplus of will-power and strong passions, lead to error, and then shows how error reacts to deepen temporary aberration into permanent character. The tragic characters tend to insanity through the fixing of their ideas in one channel. That which in their nature was a mere proclivity, easily held in abeyance by the will-power, now becomes an irresistible passion, forced onward by its own results, and they find it easier to go onward than to return.

Goethe has treated the problem of the individual in two great works of art, — the "Faust" and the "Wilhelm Meister." In "Faust" the individual has measurably attained his culture, but finds himself in collision with the world through the fact that he has arrived at agnosticism. The "Meister" traces for us the career of a youth, from the beginning at the bottom of the ladder, up to a point where he becomes clear in regard to his relations to the world.

Faust is relatively mature as regards his education or culture. Meister is immature in regard to everything.

Inasmuch as the problem of the individual is not that of the production of the universal,—not the founding of a state, or a church, or any great institution, but rather the adjustment of himself as an individual to the institutions already existing,—it follows that the first occupation to which he is called is that of education,—education, however, in the broadest sense of the word. To adapt the individual to life, to solve his problem, is to educate him into such habits of living that he may contribute his mite to society and receive in return the help of his fellow-men. The individual in each epoch of civilization has his revolt against the subjugation of his independence. He does not wish to be subordinated, without his consent, to an alien might. The process of education reconciles him to the institutions, by convincing him that they are necessary for the realization of his rational self. If they had not been made by others, and handed down from the immemorial past, he would set about making them now. As it is, he builds them anew by giving them his hearty support. Progress of the individual on this line is a continued participation in the civilization of one's age,—a thoroughly positive citizenship.

But, over against this, there is possible another career of education or culture. Supposing that there is a very deep spirit of independence in the individual,

he finds a difficulty in the bridge that leads from his own opinions and conceits to the adoption of the conviction of society. He rebels against the required subordination to public opinion, and will not bow to its behests, either as fashion of the community, social usage, law of the state, or mandate of religion. He stands at the threshold, and demands of each that it shall demonstrate to him its necessity as a rational thing before he shall adopt it. He will yield to it if it proves its rational character, but if it is only a conventional affair, a mere fashion, he will have none of it. Now the cases of strong individuality may become so frequent as to be the rule, instead of the exception. Then an age of revolution ensues, and the education of the age lays stress on the self-activity of the individual, and inveighs against authority. The centrifugal power of individuality is increased, and the centripetal power of obedience to established order becomes weakened, until it loses its constraining power. The French Revolution ensues. Individuality alone is held sacred, and all external authority accursed. Sansculottism is the result. Under the banner of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity for all, there is a swift descent to absolute personal tyranny. Each one finds a limit to his liberty in the liberty of his fellow, and through the collision arises universal distrust. The guillotine is the only remedy. Only dead enemies are safe enemies to have. Disciplined by this reign of terror, authority is again restored. Rational authority, it

has been found, must assert itself first as a mere external constraint against the individual, and initiate a process of enlightenment in him. He may learn why he obeys law and duty and fashion, and change his blind obedience into a rational obedience, which is freedom. But at all events he must obey.

In Goethe's life, extending from 1749 to 1832, the one great event in world history is the French Revolution. Indeed, our American Revolution, with its Declaration of Independence and its "All men are born free and equal," is in a certain sense a reflection of the European movement. Not only France, but all Europe, had been set aflame in Goethe's youth by Rousseau's work on the Inequality among Men. Their thoughts had been turned in the direction of democracy by his "Contrat Social" and his "Émile." The conservators of institutions knew no means of checking the revolution in the popular consciousness. No intellectual bridge could be furnished, over which it could go from pure individualism to an insight into the necessity of institutions for the realization of freedom. Hence, all things were readjusted by revolution. In the end, a necessity, which all could see, re-established institutional authority in France. Meanwhile the rest of Europe looked on and pondered the problem. The German mind had set itself about the task of discovering a theoretical necessity for the institutions of civilization. Immanuel Kant, starting from the theoretical foundation of Hume, — which might be regarded as the basis also of Rousseauism, —

had reduced the problem to its lowest terms, and finally demonstrated the necessity of the postulates of authority, moral and otherwise, for the conduct of human life. Eight years before the destruction of the Bastile, Kant published his theoretical philosophy, "A Critique of Pure Reason," showing the limits of the speculative faculty to grasp the problems of the world. The year before the French Revolution began, he published the "Critique of the Practical Reason," completing his demonstration of the necessity in human nature for the sacrifice of the individual to his higher self, as defined in the moral law and organized into institutions in the form of civilization. Thus, while the historical process went on in France, as an external phenomenon with deafening explosions, in the still world of German thought there went on a corresponding theoretical process, which more swiftly reached the positive solution. But there was another solution in progress. In the world of literature a new world-poet had been born, who was to devote his entire life to the same problem, and to leave its solution in great works of art.

It must not be understood that any of the solutions of this problem of individualism are merely negative. As suggested by Hume, stated by the Encyclopædists, put into universal literary form by Rousseau, occasion was given for a threefold answer. There was the practical answer, realistic to the last degree, — the answer beginning with the destruction of the Bastile, passing through the Reign of Terror into its logical

consequence, Napoleonism, and closing at Waterloo. There was the theoretic, speculative solution in the Kantian Critiques of the Reason, and besides this the solution of the world-literary man, Goethe. The political answer was not a mere negative one, for it refused to return to its beginning. All Europe read the verdict: No more abstract tyranny for the people. Authority, it is true, there must be; yes, but an authority that expresses the welfare of the social whole, and is reflected in the rational conviction of each individual. Not only France came to this basis, but all Europe was led to adopt it. The Kantian solution in its first aspect is negative: "Man cannot know truth theoretically," — the conclusion of the Critique of the Pure Reason. But in the Critique of the Practical Reason the solution is positive. Man, in order to be a social being, or even a rational being, must set up above himself the moral law as absolute authority. In this moral authority root the institutions of civilization: they are its instruments of realization. The literary solution of Goethe is likewise thoroughly affirmative. Rousseau had given literary form to the problem. In his wonderful prose, the question went home to the consciousness of Europe and Europeans, wherever they were. Goethe put into literary form the answer to this problem, and his answer is reaching the consciousness of the world, by progressive degrees, throughout this century and the centuries to follow.

The individual, as we have seen, if he is endowed

with a strong feeling of independence, may at any time stand on his threshold and challenge the approach of authority. As a mere individual affair, it is not of much significance. But it is possible also to find an entire historical epoch, as we have seen, given to this assertion of the individual against external authority. This genesis of individual protest against all authority justifies its treatment by a world-poet as a world-problem. Or, it might be said, the universal nature of the problem avails to give a universal significance to its literary solution and to elevate Goethe into the rank of world-poet.

We learn that Goethe, at the early age of twenty years, discovered in the popular legend of Faust the vehicle for the literary statement of the problem and its solution. He saw, in short, the problem of the reconciliation of man as individual with man as social whole, and divined the affirmative answer. He tells us himself,¹ in his letter to Wilhelm von Humboldt, in 1832, that his youthful conception of Faust had been before him for more than sixty years, "the whole series having been from the first clear to me, though not in all their details." "I have always," he writes, "quietly kept my original plan in view, and have worked out singly those scenes which happened to interest me most; so that there remained gaps in the Second Part, only to be bridged over by investing them with an interest proportioned to the rest."

¹ Quoted by Hermann Grimm, "Life and Times of Goethe." See English Translation by Sarah Holland Adams, p. 502.

Faust as a mythological character embodies the conception of an individual who obtains the service of the intellect for his selfish ends, and sacrifices his future good for present enjoyment. In its different elaborations it had come to express nearly every one of the phases that Goethe afterwards united in his work, with the essential exception that there was no other than a tragic *dénouement* for its hero. Using this legend for a vehicle, Goethe, after his manner, connected and subordinated the details into one whole which animated the parts. Every circumstance had its motive furnished for it. That which lay in it as enigmatic or unconscious, Goethe brought up to light and expressed with fulness. Why should Faust sell his soul to the Evil One? Evidently, thought Goethe, the all-sufficient motive for this is despair of attaining the blessedness of divine life. What does such despair presuppose? Unsatisfied aspiration, was the reply. The condition of this, again, perennially arose through a species of philosophic speculation, which arrived at the conviction that the Universal Power of Nature is not a personal one like man, but something formless and negative to the persistence of all forms.

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In the eighth book of his Autobiography, he tells us of his studies of the alchemists and Hermetic writers. He carried these on in his twentieth year, assisted by his friend, the Fraülein von Klettenberg. They read the works of Welling, Paracelsus, Basil Valentine, Van Helmont, and Starkey. He traced

all these writings to their source in the Neo-Platonic school of philosophers. Here was a fountain of theosophy. Those thinkers busied themselves with the problem of Nature and the Absolute. The History of the Church and of the Heretics, by Arnold, gave him the necessary clue to the relation which these Neo-Platonic speculations held to the accepted Christian doctrines, and at this early age Goethe had grappled seriously with the profoundest questions that can occupy the mind of man. Nowhere as in the history of heresy do we discover the genuine speculative basis of the Christian dogmas. The heresies arose through an effort on the part of individuals to find the necessary truth of the doctrines of the Church. The real speculative basis of these doctrines was developed by the Church fathers in their controversial treatises directed against those heresies. One familiar with those theological discussions, and especially with the Neo-Platonic and Gnostic speculations, will not be surprised to read, in the eighth book of the "*Wahrheit und Dichtung*," the statement of the view which Goethe himself had formed.¹ Attention is called particularly to his view of the possible annihilation of the wicked by continued concentration upon themselves, and of the prevention of this by an act of grace.

The speculations of Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism were little known during the Middle Ages. The contact with the Arabian learning in the tenth and

¹ Page 300 of Bohn's Translation.

succeeding centuries, and finally the westward migration of learned Greeks after the fall of Constantinople, gave a great impulse to the study of mysticism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A mixture of physical, metaphysical, and theological doctrines, expressed in a technique derived from all three sources, constituted this mysticism, often called "Theosophy." The chemical knowledge involved originated, of course, with the Arabians, and it is important to note that the metaphysics and theology were influenced in their doctrines by the alchemy connected with it. For chemistry reveals to us the mutability of material forms. In the retort, a substance can be compelled to change from one form to another.

The tendency of the mind is to generalize the facts before it. Hence the alchemist swiftly concluded: there is no form that abides, not even the form of consciousness whose shape is to be subject and object of itself. The substance, or true being, is formless. It is an energy, but an energy that acts only in two ways, to produce form or to destroy form. In itself it is in no wise any form whatever. Form belongs only to product or result, — it is *natura naturata*, and not *natura naturans*. What follows from this is evidently the doctrine of Pantheism: God is pure negative Might, and all that has form is finite and perishable. Man, too, is perishable. Moreover, by reason of the fact that consciousness is a form, it cannot appertain to the Absolute. Hence, too, the

Absolute cannot be known by human reason, because there can be nothing distinguished except by its form, and hence a formless absolute is a pure nothing to the mind. That the legend of Faust is the reflection in the popular mind of this study of alchemy, there is no doubt. Goethe takes this for granted, and accordingly places his Faust in a lofty arched Gothic chamber, surrounded by the appliances of alchemy, a library, and "ancestral lumber." In the very first scene Goethe proceeds to express in the mouth of Faust the agnostic standpoint of Pantheism: "I have been through all human learning, and know that nothing can be known."¹ He summons up spirits, the moving principle of nature, or the Macrocosm which shows all things in the world connected by interdependence.

We cannot know one thing except through the rest on which it depends. That which possesses form is dependent on the formless. We can pursue the hidden substance from one form to another, but never overtake it in its pure essence. Hence Faust, who aspires to know truth, is in despair. Recourse to magic only serves to convince him of the hopelessness of knowing the Absolute. For by magic he has summoned the spirit of the Macrocosm and the Earth Spirit. The former symbolizes his study of

¹ "In the first sentence of the poem, the fundamental contradiction, the theme, or the 'argument,' is stated in its naked abstractness, just as Achilles' wrath is the first sentence of the *Iliad*." Brockmeyer, *Letters on Faust*, III.

the infinite network of relations which constitutes nature. He cannot press through these relations to reach the Absolute ; or if he does, he encounters pure negation of all form. All form is show alone, — a mere shadowy manifestation of the Absolute. Nor is it any better with the Earth Spirit which rules a part of the Macrocosm, the earth-sphere. The celestial and the supercelestial worlds are beyond the sphere of the Earth Spirit. But Faust cannot comprehend even the earth process. It is too general, too vast, for him. The spirit that lives in "Being's floods and Action's storm" is so general and so formless that he is both birth and grave of all form. Man cannot hope to know him nor participate in his eternity. Hence aspiration for knowledge is spurned by the Absolute, and there remains only despair.

Here, therefore, is the matter for the tragedy.¹ It lies so deep that it may be regarded as including all

¹ "The denial of the possibility of the manifestation of self-conscious intelligence in the individual [i. e. the denial that man can know truth] is the denial of the possibility of its realization in the family, society, and the State [i. e. secular institutions], as well as the denial of the actualization of that intelligence in the forms of Art, Religion, and Philosophy. [For there can be no Art or manifestation of the infinite in the finite, if there is no possibility of recognizing it by conscious intelligence. So, too, religion and philosophy would be impossible.] Now if this denial of the possibility of knowing truth assume the form of a conviction in the consciousness of an individual, a nation, an age, then there results a contradiction which involves in the sweep of its universality the entire spiritual world of man. For it is the self-consciousness of that individual, nation, or age in direct conflict with itself, — not with this or that

other collisions within it. Most works of art specialize the collision and treat of an attack on the Family, or the State, or some one institution; but the Faust collision strikes at the very nature of institutions, and hence includes all the collisions treated in Art.¹

Hence the collision is so general that it demands two very different dramas for its full treatment. The ordinary drama must deal with individuals, and show them to us in their actions and sufferings. But the individual cannot embody all institutions. Only one of these, the Family, can be presented in its complete circle of individuals. The State and the Church

particularity of itself, but with its entire content *in the sphere of manifestation*, [i. e., as Mr. Brockmeyer has explained the technical use of "manifestation," it includes only the sphere of the individual man, and not the sphere of institutions,] with the receptivity for, the production of, and the aspiration after the Beautiful, the Good, the True, within the individual himself; *in the sphere of realization* with the family, with society, and with the State; and finally *in the sphere of actuality* with art, religion, and philosophy. Now this contradiction is precisely what is presented in the proposition, 'Man cannot know truth.' This was in the history of modern thought the result of Kant's philosophy, which was the philosophy of Germany at the time of the conception of Goethe's Faust." Letters on Faust, III.

¹ "This theme, then, is nothing more nor less than the self-consciousness in contradiction with itself, in conflict with its own content. Hence, if the poem is to portray this theme, this content in its totality, it must represent it in three spheres: first, *manifestation*, — Faust in conflict with himself; second, *realization*, — Faust in conflict with the family, society, and the State; thirdly, *actualization*, — Faust in conflict with art, religion, and philosophy." Letters on Faust, III.

cannot be presented except typically, by representative individuals and by allegorical masquerades. Thus we have a First Part of "Faust," in which the individual is shown to us directly as unscrupulous pleasure-seeker, who destroys the Family through the consequences of his deeds, by destroying, one after another, all the individuals of it. Then follows a Second Part, in which the practical conclusion of "Faust" as it is embodied in the fiend Mephistopheles makes its appearance in the State; then shows itself in Art and Religion, and is overcome in all these realms. The poet does not state for us the argument in logical terms, but he pictures for us the genesis of Faust's convictions, and their consequences when carried out.

The work commences with the beautiful Dedication, which expresses Goethe's objective attitude towards the great poem on the occasion of his return to it in 1797, after a lapse of twenty-three years. The Prelude on the Stage describes the three attitudes possible towards a work of art. Art may exist solely for amusement, in which case the Merry Andrew would be its culminating achievement. To the manager, Art is merely a vocation by which he gets his living, and hence he looks beyond the content to its effect in "drawing a full house." Finally, Art to the poet means the utterance of the highest inspirations, and the picturing of human nature in all its tragic greatness to the astonished spectator. The poet's idea includes amusement and terror,

pleasure and pain, — and, above all, wisdom, derived from the spectacle of human nature in its entirety. For this includes “the whole circle of creation, and a progress from heaven through the world to hell,” and also a counter movement in the opposite direction.

The Prologue in Heaven gives us, in the style of the old miracle play, a hint of the vast design of “Faust.” It takes advantage of this crude form to give us, in the way of an outline, a glimpse of the spiritual geography within which we may locate Faust. How the problem of evil arises in creation, through the very nature itself of the creative process, is suggested. Creation should reflect God, but the reflection should take place in imperfect creatures, and hence be an imperfect reflection. The finite individual, to reflect God, must be first endowed with self-activity or free will; but he may use this selfishly as well as piously. Hence the possibility of temptation by Mephistopheles, — the spirit of negation, exclusion, limitation, finitude, or selfishness. God has placed in the finite being a hunger for infinitude, — in short, what is called aspiration. Hence there is progressive development possible. This problem of evil is inherent in any theory of creation. For the finite must by self-activity come into the Divine Image. But the possession of freedom to act for itself involves the possibility of selfish actions which mar the Divine Image. The Prologue shows us the comprehensiveness of the problem of “Faust.” Endowed

with infinite aspiration, ("the glimmering of heaven's light that he calls reason,") but with finite capacity of intellect and will, man cannot choose but err. He "uses his light to be most brutal of brutes," says Mephistopheles. But the Lord says, in substance: "Man is prone to error because he is struggling to satisfy this aspiration; in his ignorance and restlessness he tries one thing after another, but will never be content with any solution that does not satisfy this divine aspiration. Hence it is permitted to the spirit of selfishness to hold out temptations to the individual, offering satisfaction to him in the form of delights of the flesh or gratification of selfish ambition for power." Mephistopheles thinks that he can satisfy this divinely created soul with dust of the earth, and so gain permanent acquisition of it. The Lord knows that, though the soul can be diverted from the true way, it never can remain satisfied with the wages of sin. It will grow more and more discontented and restless with its lot. The possession of the glimmering of heaven's light in the shape of reason will forever prevent any finite pleasure from sating the soul of Faust, and will make it impossible for Mephistopheles to win his wager.

We start, in the first scene, with the feeling of despair at the agnosticism which Faust has fallen into. The origin of this (in his studies into alchemy) is shown. He comes upon the idea of a universal principle of relativity in nature, and concludes, like Herbert Spencer in recent times, that he pursues

absolute truth in vain.¹ He leaves the problem of nature in general, and confines his attention to the earth, and even here is rudely repulsed.²

"What am I then capable of comprehending, if I cannot comprehend my earthly environment?" "You may know only your trade." Infinite subdivision of labor is necessary in order that man, the individual, may find what he can master. The same subdivision of science is necessary in order to get a sufficiently small field of view to enable the individual to behold it. How absurd then to call man a Microcosm,

¹ "The conviction that human intelligence is incapable of absolute knowledge is one that has been slowly gaining ground as civilization has advanced." Spencer's *First Principles*, p. 68.

² "Receptivity for and production of the truth are negated by the conviction that man cannot know truth, but on the wings of aspiration he sallies forth into the realm of magic, of mysticism, of subjectivity. For if reason with its mediation is impotent to create an object for this aspiration, let us see what emotion and imagination without mediation can do for subjective satisfaction. And here all is glory, all is freedom. The imagination seizes the totality of the universe, and revels in ecstatic vision. What a spectacle! But, alas, a spectacle only! How am I to know, to comprehend, the fountain of life, the centre of which articulates this totality? See here another generalization: the practical world as a whole [typified in the *Erd-Geist*]. Ah! that is my sphere; here I have a firm footing; here I am master; here I command spirits. Approach and obey your master! 'Yes, I'm he; am Faust thy peer.' 'Peer of the spirit thou comprehendest, — not of me.' No, indeed, Mr. Faust, thou dost not include within thyself the totality of the practical world, but only that part thereof which thou dost comprehend, — only thy vocation, and hark! 'It knocks!' O death! I see 't is my vocation indeed. 'It is my famulus!'" Letters on Faust, IV.

and boast of his power to know the truth of the universe !¹

The pain of this discovery is brought before us by the ensuing dialogue between Faust the aspiring seer and Faust in his vocation of professor; for Wagner the "famulus" is the type of the latter. Faust storms bitterly against the limitations. He knows the difference between hearsay and direct insight. Wagner is seeking the satisfaction of his soul in mere erudition, that collects but does not comprehend; that declaims the eloquence of others; that delights in poring over parchments; that digs in shallow trash, and rejoices to find an earth-worm. Faust has been through that stage of culture, and knows that erudition alone can never satisfy. The teaching of what he does not thoroughly comprehend, or grasp together as a whole, is odious to him.² He

¹ " 'And this too is merely a delusion; the great mystery of the practical world shrinks to this dimension, — a bread-professorship!' It would seem so; for no theory of the practical world is possible without the ability to know truth. As individual you may imitate the individual, as the brute his kind, and thus transmit a craft; but you cannot seize the practical world in transparent forms and present it as an harmonious totality to your fellow man, for that would require that these transparent intellectual forms should possess objective validity, — and this they have not, according to your conviction." Letters on Faust, IV.

² "And is this the mode of existence, this the reality, the only reality, to answer the aspiration which sought to seize the universe, to kindle its inmost recesses with the light of intelligence, and thus illumine the path of life? Alas! reason gave us error, — imagination gave us illusion, — and the practical world, the will, a bread-

perceives on his shelf a vial of poison and takes it down. If the Earth-Spirit scorns him, he in his turn can show his power to rend asunder his body, — the earthly concretion which holds him, or perhaps constitutes him. He can negate life, if he cannot comprehend it : “ Now is the time to prove by deeds that human dignity quails not before the heights of the gods.” He too can by his own act destroy his own form, like the pantheistic God that is above all form.

But during his bitter meditations the night has passed and morning has come. Of all the mornings of the year this is Easter morning, the day of the festival celebrating the rising of the Son of Man from the dead. Such a festival celebrates, therefore, the conviction that man survives his finite individuality and is immortal. If that religious belief is true doctrine, it is evident that the negative doctrine — of the Earth-Spirit and the Absolute Relativity of the Macrocosm — cannot be true. The Absolute cannot be a formless abstract power that makes and breaks forms like bubbles, but it must be an absolute Person, — yes, a divine-human Being, — who draws up beings out of the dust into his image, and preserves their individuality beyond the grave.

professorship ! Nothing else ? Yes ; a bottle of laudanum ! Let us drink and rest forever ! But hold, is there nothing else really ? No emotional nature ? Hark ! What is that ? Easter bells ! The recollections of my youthful faith in a revelation ! They must be examined. We cannot leave yet.” *Letters on Faust*, IV.

Faust listens to this announcement of the New Covenant. After the Chorus of Angels announcing the risen Christ, comes the Chorus of Women singing of the tender offices performed on pure finitude, — on a dead body, — and closing with the lament at the removal of the physical remains of the dear one. To this the angels respond with the comforting assurance of the resurrection of the individual loving and loved one. Then the disciples lament their separation from the risen one, and the angels exhort them to bring into reality his presence, by living his life of love and self-sacrifice for others. This is a complete statement of Christian doctrine: (1.) God is divine-human, who sacrifices himself for men; (2.) Let man, filled with His spirit, live for others, thus making the divine spirit the real spirit of humanity, and thus forming the highest of institutions, the Church; (3.) Man is immortal as an individual, but by renunciation of his selfish individuality he must be born again as a new and free individuality.

Faust hears these "heavenly tones," this comforting hymn, which once in other days he had heard with childish faith. Life had then seemed worth living. How does it happen that this religious doctrine makes life worth living, while the scientific truth has just now led him to suicide? He will defer suicide until he can examine once again the validity of religion. And so he goes out on Easter morning to see what it is that makes life worth living to his fellow men.

In the scene before the Gate, he stops to listen to the voices that declare the various objects in which the people can find happiness: the hunter's lodge, the mill, the river tavern, the crowd, pretty girls, strong beer, a pipe of stinging tobacco, jolly rows and squabbles, etc. *Faust takes note of these objects silently, and listens further to the citizens who discuss town politics, and congratulate themselves on being out of harm's way while their fellow men in Turkey are not; soldiers, whose trade is destruction of life and property, singing of the conquest of lofty castles and proud women, in the same beautiful metre that the angels had sung at daybreak. Faust advances toward the crowd gathered under the lime trees, and remarks in a learned way on the influence of advancing spring in thawing the rivers and reviving the herbage in the fields. So this day draws out the people from the vocations in which they are buried as in narrow tombs, and they come out and add color to the landscape. It is a sort of sun-myth, apparently, to Faust. He is glad, however, to think of a resurrection from the narrowness of one's vocation, on which the speech of the Earth-Spirit had led him to reflect so bitterly. As he approaches, all crowd around him, to show him the greatest honor as the wise physician who has saved their lives from the pestilence. Wagner by his side congratulates him on his reception, and envies his happiness at being so revered. The Wagner element in Faust must have been greatly delighted; but the doubting spirit of cul-

ture in him at once reacts. He sees the other side : "My father and I raged through these vales and mountains worse than any pestilence with our empirical remedies ; the patients died, and no one asked who got well ; and now I must live to hear the reckless murderers praised !"

Although he finds no happiness in the recognition of his power over his fellow men, he finds in it a suggestion. If I, Faust, cannot know truth, I can see at least what an opportunity for selfish gratification it affords me. If the Earth-Spirit scorns me and sends me back to my vocation, I can certainly use my vocation as the means of procuring physical pleasure. To be sure, such a life for the mere sake of living is a dog's life. For if a man uses his highest spiritual powers merely for "getting a living," (meaning by that expression procuring his food, drink, clothing, and shelter by it,) he does not live for the highest ends, but makes the highest ends quite subordinate to lower aims. Wagner's view of the object of life seems to be a dog's view, or rather he seems to make his vocation into a dog which he keeps for his service and comfort. He accordingly takes home with him to his study the thought of the dog view of life.¹ With the

¹ To Wagner it is immaterial whether he knows what he needs, provided he sees the day when the man who has been worse to the people than the very pestilence itself receives public honors; but to Faust, to the man really in earnest, — who is not satisfied when he has squared life with life, and obtained zero for a result, or who does not merely live to make a living, but demands a rational end for life, and, in default of that rational end, spurns life itself, — to

poodle he returns to the study pondering the view of life that proposes to live for the sake of living. He now proceeds to take up the question which had occurred to him on hearing the bells on Easter morning: Is a divine revelation possible to a being who cannot know the truth?

The verse of St. John's Gospel that reveals the nature of God as divine-human from all eternity is, of course, the special passage to examine. In that

such a man this whole scene possesses little significance indeed. It possesses, however, some significance, even for him! For if it is indeed true that man cannot know truth, — that the high aspiration of his soul has no object, — then this scene demonstrates, at least, that Faust possesses power over the practical world. If he cannot know this world, he can at least swallow a considerable portion of it, and this scene demonstrates that he can exercise a great deal of choice as to the parts selected: do you see this conviction?

“Do you see this conviction? Do you see this dog? Consider it well: what is it, think you? Do you perceive how it encircles us nearer and nearer, — becomes more and more certain, and, if I mistake not, a luminous emanation of gold, of honor, of power, follows its wake? It seems to me as if it drew soft magic rings, as future fetters, round our feet! See, the circles become smaller and smaller, — 't is almost a certainty, — 't is already near: come, come home with us! The temptation here spread before us by the poet, to consider the dog ‘well,’ is almost irresistible; but all we can say in this place is, that if one will look upon what is properly called a vocation in civil society, eliminate from it all higher ends and motives other than the simple one of making a living, — no matter with what pomp and circumstance, — no doubt he will readily recognize the poodle. But we must hasten to the studio to watch further developments, for the conflict is not as yet decided. We are still to examine the possibility of a divine revelation to man, who cannot know truth.” Letters on Faust, V.

verse it is revealed that God becomes a creature, and manifests himself to creatures. The revelation is made in the Greek language with the word *Logos*. One might say that this word must have meant something to the Greek mind, or else it would not have revealed the Christian idea expressed by it. But, at all events, no one can translate it into his own language unless he understands it. The dictionary meaning of *Logos* is "word," "reason," etc. Faust tries "word," but at once reflects that a word cannot be a word before it has a meaning, and hence cannot have been "in the beginning." *Logos* must therefore be translated "meaning," or "sense." But a meaning is not a power, and hence cannot originate anything; if the meaning were the first, nothing would have followed. An energy is required; hence *Logos* must be translated "Power." Further reflection discovers that nothing begins until a power acts; hence for "power" must be substituted "deed." There is a real beginning only in a *deed*. But, alas! Faust sees that he has been enabled to find the right word solely by his intellect. If he cannot understand the sense of the original by rethinking it, he cannot find words into which to translate it. Therefore, if he cannot know truth, he cannot understand a revelation of it, and hence there can be no revelation of it to him.¹

¹ "And for this purpose, — our newly acquired conviction that we possess power over the practical world, although not as yet in a perfectly clear form before us, comfortably lodged behind the stove,

The poodle idea gets restless during this examination. It has become a serious matter. If I cannot know truth, I can by my power of intellect use my fellow men for my pleasure. I can take the world for my oyster. Unscrupulous self-gratification at the expense of my fellow men is fiendish. While to ply one's vocation merely for the sake of making a living is only the idea of a dog, or any other animal, to live and enjoy myself at the expense of the injury of my fellows is demonic. Here is the transmutation of the

where it properly belongs, — we take down the original text of the New Testament in order to realize its meaning in our own loved mother tongue. It stands written, 'In the beginning was the Word.' Word? Word? Never! *Meaning* it ought to be! Meaning what? Meaning? No, it is *Power*! No, *Deed*! Word, meaning, power, deed, — which is it? Alas! how am I to know, unless I can know truth? 'Tis even so, our youthful recollections dissolve in mist, into thin air, and nothing is left us but our newly acquired conviction, the restlessness of which during this examination has undoubtedly not escaped your attention. 'Be quiet, there, behind the stove.' 'See here, poodle, one of us two has to leave this room.' What, then, is the whole content of this conviction, which, so long as there was the hope of a possibility of a worthy object for our aspirations, seemed so despicable? What is it that governs the practical world of finite motives, the power that adapts means to ends, regardless of a final, of an infinite end? Is it not the Understanding? and although Reason — in its search after the final end, with its perfect system of absolute means, of infinite motives and interests — begets subjective chimeras, is it not demonstrated that the understanding possesses objective validity? Nay, look upon this dog well — does it not swell into colossal proportions? — is no dog at all, in fact, but the very power that holds absolute sway over the finite and negative, — the understanding itself, — Mephistopheles in proper form." Letters on Faust, V.

dog into a devil. Out of the poodle comes Mephistopheles, and Faust forswears all aspirations for divine things, making a compact to renounce them, provided he can be sated with earthly pleasure.

The exorcism of the demon uses the magic formulæ, but with a subtle reference to an underlying kernel of meaning. The spirit is not one of earth (*Incubus* or *Kobold*), air (*Sylph*), fire (*Salamander*), or water (*Undine*); it does not belong to nature at all, in fact, but to spirit. It is the intellect used simply for itself and against all else, and is therefore "the spirit that denies." The sign that exorcises is the name of the "vilely transpierced" One, — the Divine Being who took upon himself the sins and punishment of others, and gave the infinite exemplar of unselfishness. This renunciation for the sake of others is the test that reveals the character of any form of sinful nature. Mephistopheles believes that all that is ought to be destroyed. In this respect he partakes of the nature of the formless god of Pantheism. All forms arise out of Substance by negation, and all return into the formless substance by means of a second negation.

All form is *Maya*, or illusion, says the Hindoo. But Mephistopheles is not generally so abstract in his views as he expresses himself on his first appearance to Faust. He usually "opposes his cold devil's fist, clenched in impotent malice against the beneficent creating power," as Faust is made to suggest. While the Creative Word delights in nursing into being the

myriad forms of nature, and in drawing them up by evolution into human beings, His image, with whom to share his blessedness, Mephistopheles, on the contrary, inspired by a spirit of envy which is the antithesis of this divine altruism, wishes to beat back into chaos all that has come into being. He wishes to share with no one else, and hence realizes the ideal of pure selfishness.

In the compact made with Mephistopheles in the following scene, the stipulations are such that Faust is certain to escape, if he retains any aspiration. If the delights of the senses can please him to satiety, of course he has lost his soul to the Evil One. "If ever I stretch myself in quiet on a bed of ease, if thou canst cheat me with enjoyment, be that day my last. . . . If ever I say to the passing moment, 'Stay, for thou art fair,' then mayest thou cast me into chains." But in his quest of happiness that does not turn into pain, he will pass entirely out of the realm of pleasures of appetite and passion, and come to those of ambition and power; these he will pass by to the pleasures of culture in art and literature, which he will desert for the final happiness of laboring for the good of his fellow men. Arrived at altruism, he has arrived at what is diametrically opposed to the nature of the demon with whom he has made a compact. Mephistopheles must satisfy him, then, by giving him such happiness as heaven affords, — that is to say, the happiness reached through unselfish devotion to others. This fiend must serve him, therefore,



and assist him in his benevolent undertakings, until he wellnigh destroys his own diabolic character.

The compact signed, the next question is how to enjoy himself. Faust's good impulses would lead him to share the pain and pleasure of humanity, and thus widen his own life by adding to it the life of the race. But his selfishness, incarnated in Mephistopheles, at once rebukes him, and exhorts him to the use of all as a means of his pleasure.¹ He despises all theories, all reflections on the regulative principles of human conduct, and wishes Faust to give them up. The gibes of Mephistopheles against philosophy and school learning are taken in good faith as Goethe's best wisdom by many readers. This adoption of the code of

¹ "Away with this striving after the impossible ! What though your body is your own, is that which I enjoy less mine ? If I can pay for six brave steeds, are they not mine, with all their power ? I run as if on four and twenty legs, and am held to be of some consequence. Away, therefore : leave off your cogitating, — away into the world ! I tell you, a man who speculates is like a brute led by evil genii in circles round and round upon a withered heath, while close at hand smile beautiful pastures green. Just look at this place. Call you this living, — to plague yourself and the poor boys to death with ennui ? Leave that to your good neighbor, the worthy Mr. Bookworm. Why should you worry yourself threshing such straw ?" The extraordinary good sense of this advice is so apparent, that it cannot be without some immediate effect, which we perceive in the scene where the different studies are reviewed by the aid of its radiance concentrated into

' All theory, my friend, is gray,
But green the golden tree of life,'

as the focal point. With this final adieu to the past, we congratulate ourselves upon the 'new career' !" Letters on Faust, VI.

the Evil One is itself quite as comical as anything in the wit of Mephistopheles. Goethe of course recognized this in its fulness ; for he makes Mephistopheles soliloquize after the departure of Faust : " Only let him despise reason and science, the highest strength that man possesses, and even if he had not contracted himself to the Devil he would notwithstanding go to destruction."

The scene with the Student emphasizes the Mephistelian view of school education. It satirizes logic and grammar, chemistry and anatomy, philosophy and jurisprudence, theology and medicine, suggesting sensuality as the proper substitute for earnest pursuit of art and science. That Goethe himself passed through all these stages of Mephistophelic opinion there can be no doubt. He was a Titan when at college in Leipzig. He attacked institutions again and again in his early life. But he outgrew this spirit of revolt by degrees. The French Revolution is the great outward event that had its reflection in the souls of the brilliant youth of that epoch. Goethe records his final verdict on that frame of mind by putting its favorite expressions into the mouth of Mephistopheles. In the passage of his Autobiography above referred to, (Book VIII. p. 300, Bohn's Translation,) we can see how he had surmounted his own speculative doubts of the warranty of civilization by the study of Neo-Platonism and Mysticism, very soon after his return from Leipzig and before he conceived his Faust. It must be supposed, however, that the very general and

abstract character of his conviction rendered necessary a long time to leaven the concrete details of his view of life. In the course of his great literary work of art, we are given to understand his final classification of all mental attitudes towards the world.

All being ready, Faust's companion spreads the mantle¹ with proper care, and they are off on their journey.

Now the question arises, What shall be the content of the first scene in which this new conviction of Faust is to be realized? Obvious enough, — the Easter morning, with its crowds of people going gayly forth to enjoy their holiday, will suggest idleness, and "loafing," as it is called, which, however, cannot be endured in solitude. There must be idle company to make idleness palatable. But an idle company are not able to enjoy their leisure purely for itself; they must forget themselves by telling amusing stories. But really artistic talent cannot be displayed without labor; the easiest wit is that lowest species which deals in profanity and obscenity. Hence we have scurrilous songs full of scandal. The choicest morsel for the idler is scandal relating to the established order of things, — the government, the Church, the industries of the community, the morals of those in

¹ " 'What about the immediate start, conveyance, etc.?' Well, I suppose Faust is not the only one that has travelled on the quality of his cloth! 'To fly through the air on Mephisto's cloak,' sounds very poetic, but to pass in society upon the strength of appearance is such an every-day occurrence that it is quite prosaic." Letters on Faust, VI.

power. But this does not suffice to dissipate the ennui of such a company. There is no recourse but to benumb consciousness by strong drink ; this alone is effective, for it loosens the hold of the senses on reality, and substitutes a world of illusion : " False form and word ! change sense and place ! be here, be there ! " Each one sees a beautiful country, with vineyards and grapes close at hand, and when error looses the bandage from their eyes they find themselves in the attitude of deadly quarrel, with knives drawn. This is truly " a devil's mode of jesting," and it does not seem to possess any attractions for Faust.¹

The next scene brings Faust to the Witches' Kitchen, whose contents are represented symboli-

¹ " We witness a peculiar social phenomenon in Auerbach's Cellar, where we have arrived in time to find our hero joining in the chorus

' We are as happy as cannibals,
Nay, as five hundred hogs,' —

or, if not our hero, Mephisto for him, — for you will notice that Faust says only, ' Good evening, gentlemen,' and ' I should like to leave now,' during the whole scene, — the very leader of the crowd in wit, song, and wine. Nay, as to the latter, he cannot refrain from giving them a little touch of his chemical science, which can dispense with the old grape-wine process, and still give perfect satisfaction to his customers, — a fact of some importance, one would suppose, to the landlord. And thus it would appear that our hero is not left to trust entirely to the quality of his cloth for the practical wherewithal. But the little ' Feuer-luft,' which one would at first have been inclined to interpret *Fume*, resolves itself into ' fire-water,' or rather the art to make this, to work the miracle of the wedding feast at Galilee on the principles of natural science." Letters on Faust, VII.

cally, as being too gross, or else too complex and prosy, for literal description. It would seem that the next experiment after the idler's holiday would be the attempt to find happiness in fashionable society. Isolate this phase of life, and make it the supreme object for man, and is it any more than a witches' kitchen? Its ball-rooms, late suppers, empty talk, and the catering for it with food and drink less adapted to satisfy hunger than to inflame passion, the clothing that does not clothe, the cosmetics and other means to manufacture forms of youth and beauty out of ugliness, — all these seem to be typified. But there is also gaming with dice, lotteries, fortune-telling, and the getting of riches by chance, — which also very accurately characterizes the frame of mind which lives for the world of mere fashion and appearance. The same principle carried into literature is satirized by putting it into the mouths of the apes: "We speak and we see; we hear and we rhyme; and if we are lucky, and if things fit, 't is thoughts, and we're thinking." Close in sequence, after games of chance and lotteries, follow speculation and forgeries by aid of the witches' multiplication-table, which can, when necessary,

"Of one make ten,
And two let be,
And three make even, — then art thou rich."

"The high power of science hidden from all comes to him who thinks not," says the witch who presides over the kitchen. Here too Faust sees in the magic mirror of fashion beautiful forms; but if he approaches

too near, he perceives that they are manufactured (by the milliner?). The potation brewed in this kitchen seems to be a species of philter, a sort of "beggars' broth," which inflames the sensual passions.

All this pleases Faust no better than the wine cellar. He thinks the fashionable apes and their conversation "the most disgusting I ever saw," and "thoroughly abominates the absurd apparatus, these frantic gestures, and repulsive cheats," and his head splits at the nonsense as of a "hundred idiots declaiming in full chorus."¹

Now commences the Margaret episode. From the

¹ The "Letters on Faust" present a different interpretation of this scene; but I prefer to follow an interpretation given by their author in an earlier course of lectures. The following remarks also, from Letter VIII., contain hints that point in the direction I have followed: "Owing to the age of the man, and the practical inconvenience he may experience therefrom in his new career,

'For idle dalliance too old,
Too young to be without desire,'

he would find it, no doubt, convenient to decrease the one and increase the other. For in this new career, the strength and number of his desires are an essential element, especially when there is every prospect of ample means for their gratification. As regards external appearance, that can readily be managed by a judicious use of cosmetics, the tailor's art, and kindred appliances. But the physical desires, the sexual passions, for example, require youth to yield full fruition. Proper culture, however, not to mention aphrodisiacs, will do much, even in this direction." Other commentators seem to prefer the interpretation given in the "Letters on Faust." A. Wyszarski (London, 1883, *The Intellectual and Moral Problem of Goethe's Faust*), for example, says: "Mephisto takes him to the Witches' Kitchen, that is to say, to those places of vulgar sin where the mystery of love is prostituted to the service of degrading voluptuousness," etc.

drinking saloon and the life of fashion, the drama proceeds to the institution of the family, realized in the persons of Margaret, her mother, and her brother. Hitherto we have had no tragedy, but only a struggle within the mind of Faust. His conviction has taken the shape embodied by Mephistopheles, and in a few short, swift scenes we are plunged into a terrible collision with the external world. First in order are the scenes which show us the meeting of Margaret just coming from the cathedral; then her room and the casket; the promenade, and Faust in love; the neighbor's house and the craft of Mephistopheles; the street scene and the resolution taken; the garden scene and the garden arbor. Then comes the scene called "Forest and Cavern," wherein Goethe has painted a powerful reaction in the soul of Faust. His emotional nature revolts against the evil influence that drags him onwards, and he tries by absence to subdue his lawless passion. Under the temporary influence of a pure love, he finds himself likewise in harmony with creation once more, and he recognizes his "brothers in the still wood, the air, the water."

But Mephistopheles finally overcomes his virtuous scruples by suggesting the picture of Margaret pining away with longing for him, — a picture realized in the next scene, in Margaret's room, where we hear her sing, "My peace is gone," — expressing the fatal attraction which draws her like a night-moth into the flame.

In Martha's garden we see them after Faust's return. Margaret is anxious in regard to his religion. Faust parries her questions with a series of answers drawn from his pantheistical system of thought. *M.* "Do you believe in God?" *F.* "Who would dare to answer yes or no to such a question? The world exists, and the heavens; a vast correlated system of energies is alike revealed and hidden by these phenomena, which we see and which we are. For we are products of nature and moved irresistibly by its ultimate force. Call this immediate feeling of love, which moves thee and me, God, love, heart, or bliss, — it is all one. I have no name for it. It is the all-embracing and sustaining unity of the universe which takes on these myriad forms, but is above and beyond them all. Feeling is all in all. Hence let us yield to it." Poor Margaret is confused by the technical expressions of philosophy, to which she is not accustomed. She admits that it is all fine and good, like the words of the priest, but for all that there is something wrong about it, for it lacks Christianity. She means to express by this her knowledge that the Church condemns it all. She has seen that Faust does not honor the holy sacraments, or at least does not desire any participation in them. Faust thinks himself an "advanced liberal" who is willing that each should have his own belief. The spirit of the Macrocosm is void of all form, and hence is neither personalty nor any physical force, but indifferent to all existing things, and also indifferent to all moral

distinctions and religious ordinances. It is in complete harmony with the collision which produces the entire movement of the drama that Faust shall put forward these agnostic arguments to overcome the religious scruples of Margaret. A God so transcendent as to be indifferent to all distinctions cannot be known as to his will and purposes ; but through our feeling we may know Him in the form of immediate impulse. "Obey impulse and leave the talk about divine commandments to dishonest priests." The conclusion is forthcoming : " You see this vial ? only three drops in your mother's drink will envelop her in a deep but pleasant sleep."

In view of this obvious interpretation of the scene, we are filled with amazement at the opinion of Mr. Lewes, that " grander, deeper, holier thoughts are not to be found in poetry " ! But what shall we say to those who insist that this passage expresses " Goethe's creed " ? When Goethe called himself a polytheist as poet and artist, a pantheist as a student of nature, and a theist in his moral and spiritual nature, it is easy to understand how these seemingly contradictory predicates are harmonized. As a poet, all nature is personified, and is full of correspondences to the soul. The poet animates and personifies objects direct, and is essentially on the standpoint of Homer and the ancient polytheism. Again, in natural science relativity becomes the chief category, and every object is traced out into some previous condition by its relations and processes. This interrelation points towards an

ultimate unity of all, indifferent to particular forms, but itself a persistent energy. Here is a pantheistic standpoint. But the necessity of self-activity in the ultimate energy brings before us the duplicate unity which we have in self-conscious being, and so we return from Pantheism to Theism even in the science of nature. Therefore Goethe in his letter to Jacobi admits that he "needs a personal God for his personal nature as a moral and spiritual man." But if any evidence is sought for Goethe's ripest convictions, it must be found in his greatest and maturest work, the "*Faust*." This scene should convince us that Goethe did not esteem highly any religion founded on the indifferent supreme being of Pantheism.¹

¹ I give in this view substantially Mr. Brockmeyer's interpretation of the significance of *Faust's* creed, as I remember it in his lectures; it is not given in his "*Letters*." The following quotations from the latter are in place here.

"This young woman, clad in purity and faith, is met at the temple of the living God, at once the primary source and the still existing refuge of the sacredness of the family relation. The severely realistic character of Gretchen, therefore, is determined by the theme; and the scene where she relates her daily occupations of cooking, washing, sweeping, etc., besides the exquisite motive which the poet employs to transfigure its prosaic commonplace, ought not to be wanting." *Letters on Faust*, IX.

"That the family relation is impossible under the conviction of *Faust*, or that an existing family should be destroyed (the mother poisoned, the child drowned, the brother slain, and the sister stand before the judgment-seat of God as the self-acknowledged author, cause, or whatever name you may give to the connection which she had with these effects), by a man's giving practical effect to the convictions of *Faust*, is acknowledged and realized by the general con-

The scene at the Fountain reflects in a "severely realistic" form the popular ethical sense before which Margaret's conscience now condemns her. The scenes increase in tragic earnestness. At the shrine of the Mater Dolorosa she appeals for rescue from shame and death. In the night scene we see the reflection of the deed of Faust in the consciousness of the brother of Margaret. Valentine attacks the serenaders and is slain. Faust and Mephistopheles flee from the country, and we may suppose they go to scenes of dissipation in the great city where we meet them on Walpurgis Night. The Cathedral scene follows. Is Margaret at the funeral of her murdered brother, or rather, perhaps, of her mother? The critics find difficulties in either case. Valentine in his soliloquy made no allusion to his mother. The fact that the accusing spirit asks, "Pray'st thou for thy mother's soul?" seems to intimate that it is her funeral. The *Dies Iræ* is sung as the "Sequence for the Dead" in the Catholic burial service. This fact makes one of the two contingencies probable. But it was more poetical to leave this matter a mere suggestion. It increases our horror to remember that, when we saw Margaret coming from the cathedral on a former occasion, she was "so innocent that she had nothing to confess." The evil spirit (*Böser Geist*), or the *accusing* spirit, personifying Conscience, suggests the contrast to Margaret: "How

consciousness of the age, as is abundantly proved by the effect which the part of the work under consideration has produced." Letters on Faust, IX.

different was it with thee," etc. When the organ peals and the Chorus sings, the accusing spirit continues to comment on the verses of the judgment hymn. The first, sixth, and seventh verses are given in the text. The spirit, however, translates the substance of the second ("Horror seizes thee!"), third ("The trumpet sounds! the graves tremble!"), and fourth ("Thy heart from its ashes flames up again in torment"). The fifth verse has the same content as the sixth, and the accuser echoes the sense of both: "Hide thyself! Sin and shame never remain concealed. Air? Light? Woe to thee!" Then at the seventh verse, which brings to a climax the helplessness of the sinner, the spirit reminds her that she can claim no advocate on that day when the just are scarcely sure of their defence: "The glorified turn their faces from thee; the pure ones shudder to offer thee their hands. Woe!" The situation represented here is sublime and terrible beyond all others in this drama.¹

Here is the finite before the infinite, the innocent led astray into crime and sin, and brought before the last tribunal. A full consciousness of this judgment takes possession of Margaret while her reason is yet unshaken, though her soul has been tried by successive shocks. The pathos of the scene reaches its highest point through the fact that the trial and condemnation are wholly unseen by the world. An ex-

¹ Mr. Brockmeyer pronounces it the most tragic scene in all literature, for the reasons stated.

ternal trial before her fellow men could not be so terrible as this judgment by her accusing conscience while the holy Chorus announces the eternal edicts. The spectator would cry out at once against any external court that condemned so dreadfully the victim of fiendish conspiracy. It is she alone who can imagine that the spirits of light avert their faces and refuse their helping hands. The closing scene of the Second Part of Faust shows us the counterpart to this scene in the cathedral.

From this scene before the heavenly judgment we descend in the following to the region of hell. Faust and Mephistopheles have fled from justice, and we are to seek them, — perhaps in Paris at some Jardin Mabille, — certainly this is the type described in the Walpurgis Night. In the celebration on the Brocken are to be found all manner of correspondences with what is infernal in human character. Spiritual jays, owls, mice, fireflies, will-o'-the-wisps, vermin, all assemble with the witches on the wild desert at the top of the Brocken. It is a realm beyond the border, hence the place of outlaws, the criminal realm. Human savagery celebrates its Witches' Sabbath on this mountain top, lighted up, as is well known, by Mammon. For Mammon is wealth used in sensuality and other selfish pleasure. A spiritual storm rages there, the elements all in collision.

Sitting around dying embers at the outskirts of the crowd, Mephistopheles comes up with the sore-heads. These are they who have lived for selfish pleasure,

and now retain their passions and ambition, but have worn out their capacity for enjoyment. They consider themselves most unjustly treated by the world. A general thinks his nation ungrateful for his services; a minister thinks that all things go badly since he left the cabinet; an unsuccessful author complains that people do not read sensible works any longer. Mephistopheles mocks them all: "Since my own cask has run down to the lees, I feel that the world also is near its end." Then Lilith and the obscene witches. But in the midst of dissipation Faust thinks of Margaret, and is haunted by the sight of a "pale, fair girl, standing alone and far off." "She drags herself but slowly from the place, and seems to move with fettered feet. I must own she seems to me to resemble poor Margaret. . . . How strangely does a single red line, no thicker than a knife, adorn that lovely neck!" Faust does not wait for the Intermezzo, — a "new performance" that is given on the Brocken. It is the counterpart of the Prelude on the stage, and shows us the Walpurgis Night in literature. The spirit of Mephistopheles is portrayed in its various literary incarnations. The plot is the quarrel between the two ideals in art typified by Oberon and Titania. Art is either for the revelation of the divine, or for amusement and to make a living.

Faust learns the fate of Margaret, "long wretchedly astray on the face of the earth, and now imprisoned and under sentence of death." A reaction sets in, which Mephistopheles is not able to meet, as

before, on the scene of the "Dreary Day." The indignant reply of Faust to Mephistopheles's "She is not the first," is annihilating in its force. They pass through the "open field," where the gibbet stands, to the dungeon. Margaret is discovered insane. In her ravings she lives over again the tragic moments of her history, and anticipates in her fantasy the scene of the execution, which forms the climax. But even in the presence of the scaffold she repels all offers of succor from the conspirator against her peace. She exclaims on seeing Mephistopheles: "What rises up from the threshold there? He! He! Send him away! What does he want in this holy place? He seeks me." She appeals to the judgment of God against the fiend. To be saved from the gallows and from God's judgment by the interposition of the Evil One is to be lost forever. She prefers the solemn human ceremony that deprives her of life, to the life of an outcast. Goethe expresses this sense of the substantial nature of social life in institutions, as contrasted with mere individual life, in Margaret's reply to Faust's "Only consent! the door lies open": "What avails it flying? They will waylay me! It is so miserable to be obliged to beg one's living, and with a bad conscience too. How wretched to wander in a foreign land, and after all be rearrested!" The very thought drives her into her ravings again.

At her refusal to be rescued, Mephistopheles pronounces the words, "She is judged," meaning that she has preferred to accept the fate decreed by the court.

But a voice from above says, "She is saved." As Faust hastens out of the dungeon, he hears the voice of Margaret calling his name. The voice comes fainter and fainter to his ears as his distance increases. He joins Mephistophéles and "disappears."

The First Part of Faust thus ends negatively. It is deeply tragic, but not in the usual manner. It is not the hero's death that we see. He does not collide with institutions and go down. His innocent victim is the one who suffers, and the guilty one escapes. In this defect we see the necessity for a Second Part. The old miracle play, like the Don Juan epos, makes the hero meet his doom in hell flames. But Goethe preserves Faust in order to treat the theme exhaustively, and finally solve it affirmatively. Thus far we have had a subjective conflict within Faust's mind, and an objective conflict with a single institution, the family. Faust's practical resolution to make the world his oyster has not resulted in happiness. On the contrary, when Margaret paints the last scene at the block, Faust says, "Oh that I had never been born!" His emotional nature, the very part of him that hungers for the pleasure of gratification, evidently is not constituted so as to adapt itself to the theory of Mephistopheles. He cannot be made happy by unscrupulous selfishness that heeds not another's pain.¹

¹ "As the result of the subjective collision, we had the conclusion, that, if man cannot know truth, he can enjoy sensual pleasure. Taking this for the principle of our action, we entered the world of

Many persons affect to admire the first part of Faust who do not find any necessity for the second part. They do not duly consider that the first part by itself is a monstrosity, judged by the standard of works of art. What drama or what novel would allow its hero to destroy an entire family of innocent people, and yet escape due punishment at the hand of his fellow men? Even the puppet play was careful to punish Faust in the fires of hell; but Goethe's Faust, in its first part, does not show us the hand of society avenging itself on the true criminal, nor does it, on the other hand, show the conditions of the compact with Mephistopheles fulfilled, so that the soul of Faust is in danger of forfeiture.

With all these crimes, Faust has not found his moment of happiness which he can bid "Stay, for thou art fair." Mephistopheles cannot claim him, for he has not gratified him with sensual delight, according to the terms of the bond. Faust's soul has not become wholly devilish, because he has wished to save Margaret from her fate, and, failing in that, is plunged in deep remorse. Remorse, it is true, is not the punishment required by a work of art. The punishment should come from the hand of society to satisfy the conditions of a drama. But remorse is sufficient in this play to cheat Mephistopheles of his due. Hence,

reality, and lo! it crumbles under our feet. Not life, not perpetuity of the race, but death, — blank nothingness; the conclusion reads, 'If man cannot know truth, then he cannot exist.'" Letters on Faust, IX.

both the external and internal conditions of the play demand the continuation of the drama into another part.¹

When setting out on the journey Mephistopheles names the destination: "The little world and the great world we will see." The little world contains what may be represented directly in its proper persons. All the members of the family may be brought before us in the drama; but we cannot see in like manner all the members of a state or of civil society;

¹ "The destruction of the family and the preservation of the destroyer will hardly pass for a satisfactory solution, either logical or artistic. To regard the poem, however, in this light, would be our own act, and the consequent difficulty one of our own creation. For this would be an attempt to make rather than to read the poem. And whatever merit or demerit might attend the undertaking, it would hardly be fair to attribute either the one or the other to the author of *Faust*. For in this poem we have for our theme, 'the self-conscious intelligence in conflict with itself, — with its entire content.' Not the content with itself, but the self-conscious intelligence on the one side, and its content on the other. Included within this content [as a single phase of it], we have the institution of the family. Hence, the collision presented is one not inherent in this institution, for that involves as its presupposition the valid existence thereof, [i.e. a collision in the family presupposes the family,] but between the family and its negation. It is, therefore, not an independent, but a subordinate collision. . . . Since the family is only a part of this content, the conflict is not exhausted by the destruction of the family, any more than it was exhausted at the end of the subjective collision which resulted in the destruction of the rational vocation of *Faust*, and delivered him over to the guidance of the understanding with its finite aims, — sensual indulgence. Hence, no solution is presented [in this First Part], or is possible as yet." Letters on *Faust*, IX.

nor can art and religion be presented except in a typical manner to us. Two different modes of art, therefore, prevail in the Faust. Objects of universal scope and significance, like nature and humanity as a whole, or like the process of empirical science, the realm of philosophical ideas, or the history of the Christian religion, are represented in types or mythological figures, such as Dante has used in the Terrestrial Paradise, where the elements of the Church and their history are emblematically bodied forth. Thus we have such forms as the Erdgeist, the Macrocosm, the dog, the Homunculus, the Mothers, and the closing scene in Heaven, all adumbrating what cannot be presented to us immediately, like the family, whose members we may see and hear.¹

Mephistopheles is the mythological impersonation of unscrupulous selfishness, which sacrifices others for its own greed. It is the human subjective counterpart of the Earth-Spirit, who is conceived to create a world of human beings, and endow them with aspirations for infinite truth, but who withholds from them all possibility of attainment, — who is, in short, a birth and a grave for all individuals. If man worship such a god, and take him as a model on which to mould his own character, he will of course become a “spirit that denies.” He will not feel himself bound to respect any finite particular beings like men, nor

¹ This is an epitome of Brockmeyer's view, given at length in his lectures (unpublished). He holds that presentative art is used chiefly in the First Part, but representative art in the Second Part.

any being subordinate to him, because such are not respected by the Absolute. He will respect only the great negative powers of nature, over which he can exercise no control, and which therefore resemble in this regard the Absolute. Mephistopheles justifies himself, accordingly, by saying that all things called forth into being out of the void are destined for destruction again by the same pantheistic energy that created them, and therefore "it were better had they never been created." Like the Earth-Spirit, too, he has reserved the flame for his element. Hence, one might trace out the logical connection between the Earth-Spirit and Mephistopheles, — the former conceived as the objective universal process of the world, and the latter as a human character formed in imitation of that type as an ideal.

Goethe believed in typical facts (*Urphänomene*) in science, as he tells us himself. The Second Part of Faust deals in artistical devices equivalent to those types in nature. In consequence of this form of representation, the entire work is an enigma to most
7 readers. Portions of the Margaret episode are vividly clear to all, — as if written with lightning flashes on a thunder-cloud. But it is of far more importance to the literary student to master Goethe's typical forms. They constitute a system of mythology, under which the modern world masquerades, just as truly as the Greek world did under Homer's system of Olympian deities. A long life of keenest observation and reflection, reinforced by poetic inspiration, is summed

up in these new symbols. It is the highest object of intellectual culture to comprehend those vast general processes of the social world which generate these problems of life, of which all art worthy of the name treats. Such phenomena as the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, the American Republic, productive industry, the revival of art, modern literature, the scientific spirit, — all these and their like are intimately concerned with Mephistopheles and the victory over him.

He who aspires to find in literature something higher than mere idle amusement, therefore, will study Faust, and especially its Second Part. Earnest study will discover the significance of the vast shadowy forms, and the student will by degrees learn to use those mythologic types, and think out by their aid solutions to the problems of the world. Classic literature has furnished us with mythologic personages and events as means of expression for life; but for life as it was in the classic epoch, and for life in all ages only in so far as it is identical with it. The poetical insight discovers the essentials of human life, and expresses them in any age or in any nation. But the temporary environment of those essentials, and the consciousness that characterizes the epoch, require special treatment. Hence, it is necessary for a new world-poet to appear in each epoch, if its prosy elements are to be made poetical, and the age is to have a spectacle of itself in its recognizable features.

The Second Part of Faust moves in an atmosphere entirely different from that of the First Part. It is serene and full of light, — a truly Celestial Paradise compared with the Inferno of the First Part. The “little world,” where the individual can make or mar, is behind us in the journey, and we are arrived at the “great world” of institutions which transcend the individual might and are the joint product of the social whole.

The first and opening scene portrays for us the influences of nature and the lapse of time, which heal spiritual as well as physical wounds. In the case of spiritual injuries, there must be repentance and renunciation, a removal of the cause, just as in the case of physical wounds there must be a removal of the producing causes before the healing process can set in. Tepid winds, the fragrance of flowers, shadow and twilight, night's repose, — these are the elves that draw out the barbs that remorse fixes in the soul. These fiery bitter arrows of self-reproach (*des Vorwurfs glühend bittre Pfeile*) allude to his genuine repentance for the evil he has done. Mephistopheles repents of nothing, and suffers no grief in his mind. But Faust has a human heart besides his evil principles, and suffers for his sins.

A new day awakes after the beautiful Chorus of the Elves recording the march of the Hours. Ariel announces the approach of the sun, a symbol of the Absolute, and we have an allusion to the baffled pursuit of pure truth. The full light of the sun cannot

be borne, but one may gaze refreshed upon its refracted image in the rainbow. So, instead of pure truth, let us look upon its refracted image in the institution of the State, which we shall see in its visible representative.

In the second scene we behold this Emperor and his court. It is not *a* State, but *the* State,—the Holy Roman Empire, which in the time of Charlemagne included all Western and Central Europe, and under his successors in the Middle Ages included Italy and Germany, but finally was confined to the latter country. It is the true “Monarchy” of Dante, whose universal power shall bring unity of law, and consequently peace, to all the world. It is borne in mind that the coronation of the Emperor took place in Goethe’s city, Frankfort, and in his youth he had seen the great festival accompanying it.

In the Emperor, Goethe has given us a Faust of the type we have seen in the First Part. He wishes to be amused and is not scrupulous as to the means. He is a selfish pleasure-seeker, who has virtually signed a compact with Mephistopheles. Faust has passed beyond this phase of immediate sensuality by the purgatorial influences of sin and remorse, and now has ambition for power, and will soon develop a passion for art. The description of the condition of the Empire, on the verge of ruin, is given through the mouths of the Chancellor, Commander-in-chief, Treasurer, and Lord High Steward. Unscrupulous devices of Mephistopheles at once provide means for cele-

brating the Carnival. This is prepared under the direction of Faust, who embodies in the masquerade a political phantasmagoria showing the genesis and destruction of the State. In like manner, the classical Walpurgis Night gives the genesis of Greek art out of Egyptian and Syrian art, — a sort of symbolic-classic phantasmagoria, as the “*Helena*” is called a “*Classico-Romantic Phantasmagoria*” by Goethe himself; the latter shows the genesis of modern or romantic art through the study of the classic art.

Amusement and play have this significance: man loves to see himself as a social whole. In play the individual enjoys the sense of his potential greatness without the real labor and suffering necessary to produce it. The species, the race, is a giant; the individual, by contrast, a puny dwarf. The Carnival as an annual festival has this significance: man delights to see the image of society, and to feign that he as individual is free to assume any station or vocation for himself. The beggar may masquerade as king, the slave as master, the male as female, the high as low, celebrating in this way the fact that each man is in substance all men. It was not a wide departure from the original and traditional purport of the carnival, therefore, for Goethe to employ it, as he does, to adumbrate the genesis and destruction of the highest political institution, and show us civil society, with its many vocations, grounded on the power of civil government.

In the Carnival scene we see peace and plenty under

the masks of the olive branch and the wheat sheaf, beauty and refinement typified by the fancy nosegay and the budding roses. Then the gardeners, the mother and daughter, and the dumb show following it, illustrate the social instinct to veil the natural under the form of the ideal. The drunken man is the consequence of the gratification of mere natural appetite : intoxication may realize the carnival at any season of the year. But the natural appetites must be restrained if society is to be, and for this purpose the Graces enter on the scene. These insist on seeing the ideal, in place of the real. They restore freedom and charm to society. The Fates, who follow next, state the limits, laws, and measures that result from the application of the ideal to the real, and hence they are kindred of the Graces. They set up a standard, or norm. But the Graces have counterparts, the Furies. Reject the Graces, who treat each one as if he embodied all human perfection, — and this is the essence of courtesy, — and take note only of human limitations and imperfections of individuality, and you will invoke the Furies. Hatred and jealousy, calumny and slander, destroy the social bond, and lead on to violence : Tisiphone mixes poison, and sharpens daggers, and sets in motion the infinite progress of the feud and blood revenge.

Authority is shown to be necessary as the foundation of society, and to control the Furies. Its mask now enters as a Colossus, an elephant guided by Prudence sitting on his neck, with two chained fig-

ures walking on either side, in whom we are to recognize Fear and Hope, the former signifying mistrust, which suspects evil in one's neighbor, and thus lacks confidence sufficient to combine with its fellow men ; the latter, Hope, in the sense of green trustfulness, which goes to the other extreme, and places all its fortune in the hands of other individuals, and thus reaches the same result, the destruction of society. High aloft rides Victory, dazzling the sight. Zoilothersites, the partisan defamer who works to undermine civil authority, is chastised by the herald.

Under the sway of civil order, property becomes secure, and wealth may be accumulated. The car of Plutus (the god of wealth) accordingly enters now, guided by a boy charioteer dressed in the robes of Apollo as leader of the Muses, who tells us that he is Poesy. While Poesy guides the car of Plutus, a taste for the beautiful converts wealth into a blessing for all people. The poet uses wealth in the service of art ; he gilds all prose reality with the gold of his own imagination, so that no one looks upon it any more as a plain ugly fact, but sees it shining with the ideal. Just in this way Walter Scott has gilded the lakes and moorlands of Scotland, or Longfellow and Whittier and Hawthorne have gilded places and scenes in New England. After the boy-Apollo has snapped his fingers, gold and pearls and costliest jewels abound. He uses wealth for pictures, statues, stately temples, scientific museums, parks for healthful amusement. We learn to see the prose fact trans-

figured by associations with human interests, and crowned with an aureola of historic importance.

The chariot of wealth is drawn by dragons or watchful guardians of property, — the police, the civil and criminal judiciary, and the men of the law. In contrast to the right user of wealth comes the starveling, Mephistopheles masquerading as *Avarice*, sitting on a chest of gold behind Poesy. He uses wealth to corrupt the morals of the people, and, for effeminate luxury or for selfish hoarding purposes, keeps property out of channels of greatest usefulness.

Poesy now takes leave of *Plutus*, and extravagance under the influence of Mephistopheles, dissipates the wealth in the form of molten gold, which the crowd struggle to obtain. Wild riot ensues.

The Emperor comes in under the mask of *Pan*, as a selfish tyrant, with rough satyrs, gnomes, fauns, giants, and nymphs, typifying selfish courtiers and the hangers-on at the licentious court circle that surrounded the central power in the Holy Roman Empire, and especially the French king just previous to the Revolution. Waste of property on the part of men in power demoralizes the industries of the people. The destruction of the civil authority takes place through the evil influence of the parasites that infest the highest political power. The whole fabric of the State flames up in one disastrous revolution, in which the Emperor *Pan* ("L'état c'est moi") is consumed in flames, — or appears to be in the representation. The herald laments, and *Plutus* (the mask of *Faust*) announces the Carnival closed.

→ The following scene shows a pleasure garden, in which the Emperor thanks Faust for the amusement he has received from the masquerade. To his great surprise, the ministers enter and report all their former difficulties overcome by the new invention, — the Mephistophelian principle has invented for the use of the State an inconvertible paper money !¹

✓ Goethe had studied the phenomenon of the French "assignats," and seen their wonderful inflation and disastrous collapse. All becomes prosperous at once: commerce being stimulated to the highest degree, agriculture and manufactures flourish. With plenty of money we must have amusement. The beautiful must be presented by Faust in its highest form, — Greek art. Helen must be brought back and "materialized." Mephistopheles cannot create the beautiful, for he engages only to adapt finite means to finite ends; the beautiful is produced by putting the finite under the form of the infinite, i. e. by making it appear as expressing personal freedom. But Mephistopheles, as principle of negation, can show how to think abstractly, so he gives a "little key" (*Nein*, = not, i. e. the negative typifies all abstraction), to Faust,

¹ "Paper money is the money of the understanding; gold, the money of the reason." Brockmeyer's Lectures on Faust (unpublished).

This wonderful commentator has not carried out his interpretation beyond the First Part of Faust, except so far as to lay the basis for, and show the necessity of, the two parts, and indicate the two styles of treatment and the two different spheres of life to be treated.

and advises him to seek the "Mothers." He cautions him to hold the key off from his body; and with good reason, for if one is to understand the mode of thinking of another people far separated by time, he must free himself from his subjective personal likes and dislikes, and get an objective criterion. The operation of the key he describes: "Sink, then! I might say also, rise! it is the same thing: fly that which has come into being, in the unbound spaces of forms." This seems a poetic way of describing philosophic reflection, which abstracts from the conditions of existence in order to reach pure ideas. The "Mothers" are enthroned goddesses, spaceless and timeless like Plato's archetypal ideas. Mephistopheles describes these with much particularity. They are seen by the light of a glowing tripod engaged in creating and transforming finite things, — "the eternal amusement of the eternal intelligence." The patterns of all creatures hover round them. Plutarch describes the Platonic ideas as "the causes, forms, and original images of all things which have been and which shall be." Commentators find passages in Plutarch's *Morals* which may have furnished Goethe the poetic images here used, but it is clear enough that the idea is Platonic, and traces to Plato's Pythagoreanism. While it is interesting to examine minutely the details of this remarkable device by which Faust brings up Helen from the underworld, it is not necessary for the general purposes of comprehending Faust. Goethe wishes to embody in a type the method of the

a priori road to the principles of the Beautiful. No modern can understand the spirit of Greek art without such a journey to the "Mothers." The Mephistophelian "spirit that denies" cannot accompany Faust on his journey thither, although it has to furnish a necessary key, abstraction from one's own environment. Greek art has an environment peculiar to it, and it is necessary to comprehend that in order to see its genesis.

Faust brings up Paris and Helen to the stage, and exhibits them to the mighty Emperor, — much as Racine and Corneille produced for the court of Louis XIV. their French-Greek plays. But here we are to learn that the *a priori* method, although sufficient to accomplish such wonders as these, does not suffice for the soul that falls in love with art. Faust touches Paris with his key, and an explosion follows. The "materialized" spirits vanish, and Faust lies senseless on the ground. The danger of this method of producing art is, that, when the artist comes to the concrete, he supplies modern details and environment, and not the antique. He falls out of his part. The Greek art exists for the Greek type of culture, Helen for Paris, and Paris for Helen. If Faust wishes Helen for himself, he must create in himself the Greek type of culture by the slow process of studying its genesis step by step. His *a priori* method may bring him to the spectacle of the beautiful, but it does not give him creative possession of it. French-Greek art is after all not Greek in spirit, although it has

some external resemblance to it. Racine and Corneille both touched the resuscitated Greek with their magic key. Like Faust, they insisted in putting themselves into the play, or, what is the same thing, making the Greek form of the drama hold modern personages and ways of life.

Faust became unconscious of the modern environment in his absorption with the classic, and took no more interest in the affairs of the Emperor's court. Mephistopheles must seek out a means for the nearest approach to the antique beautiful, and accordingly returns to Wagner, the spirit of analytical investigation and prose erudition. For the substantial restoration of the Greek spirit, and the contemplation of Greek art in that spirit, in our age, we must have something besides the *a priori* production of it. There must be excavations, and the collection of fragments, which are to be studied piece by piece, in the manner that erudition and archæology have undertaken.

The Homunculus represents this spirit of specialization: it is confined in a bottle, and typifies the German archæologist realized in Winckelmann and his followers, and, less directly, the entire modern spirit of inductive science.

If sufficiently limited, a field of investigation mapped out may be exhausted by the individual specialist: when he knows it exhaustively, he learns to see the relativity of all its details. Each detail is dependent upon and suggests all the others. It thus

becomes alive, for the definition of a living organism is this : each part is both means and end to all the other parts. Sufficiently specialized and narrowed down, the province may be so exhaustively investigated that the living bond of connection may be found, and a living being is produced, — an Homunculus in a bottle. Wagner is the sort of scholar who learns to “confine his attention to the dative case,” in order that he may not simply rehash erudition already existent, but himself make new contributions to it. We think of Winckelmann patiently measuring the contour of the several features of the face, as he found them in antique statues, and recording the angle which the open eyelids made as a canon by which to identify Venus, Juno, and Diana by this feature alone.

✓ The history of modern science abounds in Homunculi. Cuvier specializes comparative anatomy, and can see the whole animal in a newly discovered fossil bone from the Eocene strata ; Lyell can read its history in a pebble ; Niebuhr can see the actual history adumbrated in a Roman myth, and, like Lyell, interpret it as a sort of drift boulder of humanity, broken off from its connecting strata, and ground into its shape under the glaciers of revolution ; Agassiz could reconstruct the whole fish from one of its scales.

With Homunculus to light the way, Faust may find Helen, of a surety. The classical Walpurgis

✓ Night shows the process by which Greek art itself was found. It began with traditions from Egypt and Syria, and developed out of their art-forms, half ani-

mal, half human, such as the sphinxes, griffins, sirens, centaurs, pygmies, and dactyls. Progressive metamorphoses separated the human from the animal, and finally reached the sea-nymph, Galatea, as the perfect human form. The artists of Rhodes claim to be the first to represent the high gods in human forms. The Cabiri (or "mighty ones") of the Phœnicians and Egyptians, sons of Phtha (the Egyptian Vulcan), the divine metal-worker, indicate the bronze statues of the gods produced by Phtha (hence called his sons), and mark an important transition towards Greek art. The studies into the origin of the earth, rather poetic conjectures than scientific conclusions, divide between a water principle and a fire principle. Thales and Anaxagoras represent these tendencies, and find place in Goethe's poem because they mark the undercurrent of reflection that guides unseen the development of Greek art in its selection of a worthy representation of the divine form. The fire, symbol of spirit, with water, symbol of organic matter, are united in Greek art so that neither preponderates. Homunculus aspires to free himself from the confinement of his bottle, — empiricism strives to return to a vision of the totality. On the appearance of Galatea, shining with the radiance of perfect beauty, he breaks his glass against her chariot, and becomes Eros, or poetic inspiration, which sees the whole in each part. X

In the study of art Faust arrives at the insight into the formative principle in the divine. Instead of being negative to form, as Pantheism supposes, it is

rather the formative energy that Polytheism presupposes. Proteus, who is indifferent to all forms and yet ceaselessly incarnating himself, teaches Homunculus how to escape from his bottle, proving himself to be the principle that initiates forms, and breaks forms only to grow by transformation into higher ones. The poet learns to recognize in all things the one spiritual principle; and this is the reason that he speaks in the language of metaphor and personification, having learned that all things are means of spiritual expression.

The *a priori* mode of reaching Greek art gave place to the other method of specialization, which sufficed to bring Greece before us in its actual genesis. But the result of the specialized inquiry conducts us back to the standpoint of immediate insight, typified by Eros, i. e. poetic or artistic insight, which sees all nature a revelation of the spiritual totality, just as a single bone revealed the living animal to Cuvier.

The "Helena" has the advantage of the wonderful commentary of Thomas Carlyle. Faust finds Helen; Euphorion is born, adumbrating modern art and literature arising from the union of the Greek and Teutonic principles. The Greek sought the representation of free individuality; the Teutonic seeks the realization of freedom in actual life: the union of the two is Romantic art, — the art whose principle is infinite aspiration. But Faust does not find his problem solved by art, — Classic or Romantic. One great thing he has learned from it, as we have seen, — the Divine

reveals itself in forms, and above all in the human form. This points towards a divine-human nature. The Absolute is at least a form-giving principle, and loves to initiate forms and to perfect them. The real essence of the human form, it is true, is not the body, but the soul,—an energy whose characteristic is to be subject and its own object. This principle of form as the essential form therefore transcends physical form, although it finds expression in the latter. Faust leaves art, and struggles up to a more adequate communion with the essential truth, that he has now seen a glimpse of. There is a more intimate acquaintance possible than through art. He can recognize the Divine in his fellow man, and feels the Absolute to be the Spirit of the invisible Church of humanity.

7 In the fourth act we see Faust aspiring to become a useful citizen in the secular world. He desires to see the people multiply and be well fed, and, what is more important, "taught and well bred," and above all active in helping each other.

The Mephistophelian Emperor has lived for a while in luxury by means of his paper money, but the deluge came at last in the shape of revolution. Faust is, however, no longer in the negative mood, but wishes to build up rather than tear down. He assists the Emperor to quell the insurrection. He does not ask in return the gift of a principality, but only the shore of the sea, with the privilege of reclaiming the land covered by the ocean wastes. It is a place for labor rather than a finished product that he wants. He does

not conceive the Absolute to be a fixed result, like a work of art, nor a mere negative process, like the formless Absolute of Pantheism. He is an Energy that delights to make that which is bad good, and that which is good better, in the interest of human beings.

The fifth act shows us Faust engaged in this labor of building dikes and canals, and a busy people settling on the newly recovered land, and an ocean commerce thriving.

Here at last Faust has found the moment which seems "fair," and he could live in the thought of it forever without tedium. This, then, is the goal and object of human nature, that condition for which it was intended. To be the builder of a great public benefit gives him a consciousness that is ever gratifying. In the service of his fellow men he sees that he can always be happy. He overcomes finally his worst enemy, impatience (he had cursed patience deeper than all on occasion of his compact with Mephistopheles) and now renounces magic. He sees in magic the unscrupulous might that looks only to the end desired, and is not duly considerate of the welfare of the human interests which furnish the means. The burning of the cottage of Baucis and Philemon by his agents, under the guidance of Mephistopheles, is represented as teaching him this last lesson. He refuses now to recognize his nearly helpless condition, worn out and blind with age and life's cares. He finds refuge from all grief in absorption in his great

work. He will set at once about draining a pestilential marsh that still remains by the neighboring hill. Space will be furnished for many millions of human beings, — not to dwell in repose, but daily earning their freedom, and in the constant feeling of their mutual dependence. With this thought, which can bring happiness to him even in the physical pain of death, he dies. Mephistopheles has brought him to say to the passing moment, "Stay, for thou art fair," and technically in one sense won his wager; but in reality he has lost his wager, for he has not found any sensual delights nor selfish delights of any kind that could satisfy Faust. He has found that, not selfishness, but altruism alone, can satisfy human nature. The angels, therefore, win Faust's soul. They appear in the clouds and drive away the demons with a shower of roses (symbols of love). The good does not fight with weapons of hate; but to the demonic nothing is so repulsive as love and self-sacrifice for others.

The closing scene is the noblest culmination of this wonderful drama. It shows us the four great leading ideas of Christianity which have characterized the four epochs of its history. —

Pater Ecstaticus is the type that prevailed in the first epoch. Then the individual had to renounce not only his animal nature, but also the heathen civilization, and flee to the desert, seeking as a hermit to purify himself within. He sought later, under the lead of St. Benedict, to create artificial desert caves

by building monasteries with high walls, which shut out civilization, although in the midst of it. The monastery improved on the solitary hermit life by forming a Christian community, a Church. Pater Ecstaticus is eager for martyrdom, to purge away the earthly dross that dims his purity.

Next came, in the thirteenth century, two wonderful men, St. Dominic and St. Francis. Both issued forth from the monastery to conquer the world outside of its walls. It was not sufficient to shut out the world; sin must be shut out from the world. St. Dominic's movement is typified by Pater Profundus. The Dominicans revived learning, and mastered the literatures and philosophies of ancient times, and built up the vast structure of Christian theology. They recognized God, not as hostile to nature and science and literature, but as the Creator of them. Hence, Pater Profundus recognizes "messengers of God's love" in the lightnings and torrents that had been thought the work of the Devil.

Pater Seraphicus, typifying the movement of St. Francis, who went out to the lowliest people, and repeated Christ's mission to the beggars and outcasts, expresses his tender love for that which is most in need. "Boys with a soul and sense half shut," having died before they saw the light of this life, are for the angel souls the sweetest gain. They have been deprived of the experience of the earth-life, but the angels will see to it that it is all made up to them by imparting to them their experience. "Use my

eyes," says the holy father, and "gaze upon the world of human experience." This is the finest touch in Faust. Instead of the cold haughtiness of the Earth-Spirit, who repels human finitude, Goethe has found that God's love is so tender toward individuality that it nurses into being and fulness even the embryonic forms that fail to mature in the earth-life. The spirit of Faust is placed in charge of these embryonic souls, who receive him in his "chrysalis state," and proceed to loosen the flakes of earthly nature that encompass him.

Doctor Marianus (named from Maria, because he proclaims the Virgin) is the complement of Pater Seraphicus in that he utters the doctrine that the highest principle in the universe is God's grace, symbolized under the form of the Holy Virgin, who appears as Mater Gloriosa, surrounded by penitent women, among whom we recognize Margaret.

It has been suggested, however, by Rosenkranz and others, that Doctor Marianus represents the soul of Faust after it has grown "fair and great by holy living," as the chorus of blessed boys pronounces him after the earthly flakes are removed. Pater Ecstaticus is represented as "hovering up and down"; Pater Profundus as in the "lower region"; Pater Seraphicus as in the "middle region"; Doctor Marianus as "in the highest, purest cell." It would seem from this that Doctor Marianus is intended as a fourth in the list of historical types. Düntzer informs us that "Doctor" was substituted for "Pater," as first written. The "blessed

boys" who welcomed Faust hover about him, and announce that Faust is outgrowing them with mighty limbs, and that he will return them a rich reward for their assistance; he will share with them his rich earthly experience. Doctor Marianus exhorts the penitents to look up to the tender glance of the Madonna, who has been drawn near to the earth to assist them. This, coming directly after the Mater Gloriosa has assigned Faust for instruction as an immature spirit ("Still blindeth him the new glare of day") to Margaret, in reply to her petition, proves that Goethe could not have intended to represent him under the title Doctor Marianus.

✓ Margaret's prayer to the Mater Gloriosa intentionally recalls her prayer to the Mater Dolorosa in the First Part.

✓ A Chorus Mysticus closes the drama, uniting in one statement the doctrines of the Holy Fathers and of the Doctor, and announces the doctrine of divine grace as the supreme principle: "All that is perishable is but a symbol; the inadequate grows here to complete reality; the indescribable here is accomplished; the Eternal-Womanly draweth us on."

The womanly element in the Divine Being describes especially the tenderness and graciousness that nurture what is feeble and impotent, and lacking character, into strength and maturity. The infant lacks responsibility, and cannot be treated from the standpoint of justice without destroying him. His deed of caprice must not be returned upon him as on a

mature person. His freaks and irrationality are borne patiently by the mother, and his individuality gradually drawn out and developed. Hence, the feminine element in the Divine Nature has especial reference to God's grace, which, according to Goethe, deals with a world of imperfect creatures, and leads them towards their own good through their freedom. ✓

In the eighth book of the Autobiography, already referred to, Goethe indicates such a view of theology at the age of twenty years as corresponds with the conclusion of this Second Part of Faust. When man had fallen, instead of permitting him to lapse into annihilation, the Elohim chose to initiate a movement of restoration, and to save by an act of divine condescension what was otherwise lost through perversion of its own freedom.

It is, if I am not mistaken, the most interesting event in literary history, that Goethe should conduct his hero from pantheistic agnosticism to Christian theism. ✓

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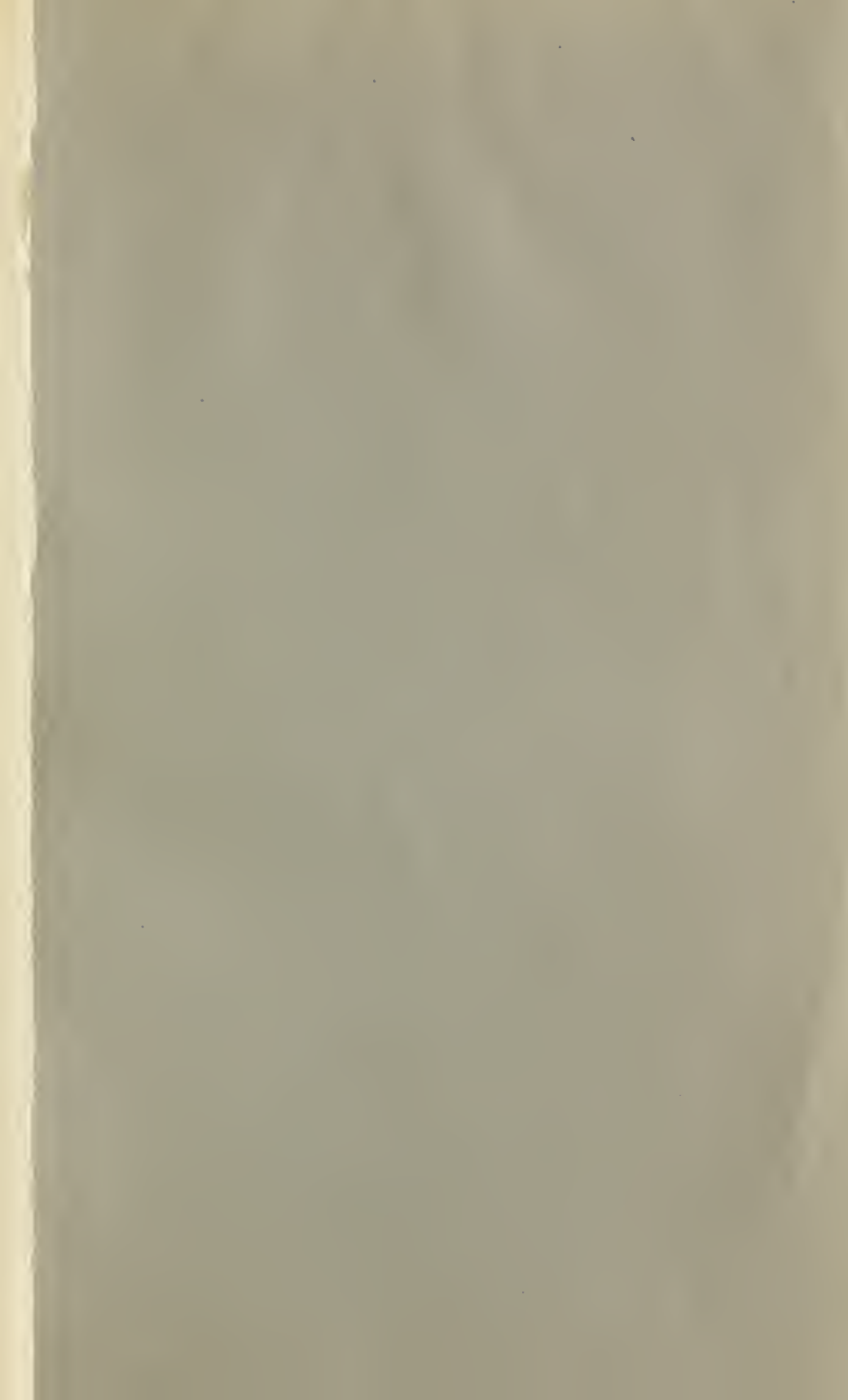
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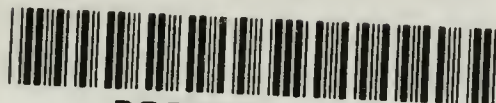
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